



Meeting Notes  
Community Advisory Board (CAB)  
March 17, 2021  
2:00pm – 4:00pm  
Virtual Meeting – WebEx

---

Meeting attendance available [here](#). | Recording of meeting available [here](#).

---

Introductions

- We'll be posting a recording of this meeting on the web. Meeting is being livestreamed thought YouTube.
- Objectives
  - Learn about the themes in our stakeholder 1:1's.
  - View next steps on the community survey.
  - Learn about Town Halls, happening soon!
  - Reminders about CAB involvement, opportunities to support through advertisements, communications.
  - Happy St. Patrick's Day find the hidden Shamrock

2021 Timeline

- Look ahead to 2021
  - January – February
    - Charrette 1: Community & Equity (completed)
    - Charrette 2: Clean Energy Economy (completed)
    - Charrette 3: Intersection of the Natural & Built Environments (completed)
    - Stakeholder, ACCGov interviews (ongoing)
  - March – April
    - Stakeholder, ACCGov interviews (ongoing)
    - Public outreach begins (ongoing)
    - Survey deployment & results analysis (ongoing)
    - Town Halls
    - Plan outlining, development begins
  - May – September
    - Plan development and revisions
    - CAB feedback
  - October – December
    - Plan completion
    - Commission presentation and vote for adoption

Report-Out from Stakeholder 1:1s

- Meetings are still ongoing.
  - The following summary are the themes thus far.
- Met with organizations from a wide range of types and sizes.
  - Local/small businesses, manufacturing, retail, warehouse spaces, large/statewide businesses.
  - Community orgs focused on veterans & elderly populations.



### Business Leaders 1:1 Report Out

Q1.) Please tell us about any energy-related sustainability efforts that your company currently has underway, in planning stages, or may be considering.

- Varying levels of efforts. Some are very advanced, and have their own sustainability goals. Others are just starting out or need resources/help to get started.
- Energy
  - Solar tubes, light sensor system, LEDs, solar arrays, energy surveying, & efficient auxiliary power units
  - Electric vehicles & equipment.
  - Energy efficient appliances, HVAC, and other systems
- Water
  - Low flow toilets, waterless urinals, no irrigation
  - Trying to harvest water from production for non-potable use
- Other
  - Composting, buying local
  - Reduce Greenhouse gas goals
    - Production generated CO2 recovery.
  - Zero waste entering landfill goal (hardest item plastics)
  - LEED certified

Q2.) If your business is not currently engaged in energy sustainability efforts, what are some of the barriers or considerations that have prevented you so far?

- Lack of Knowledge
  - Need for education around how to start & be cost effective. E.g acquiring solar for building
  - Don't know how to start or what questions to ask
- Location
  - Roof usage & space for solar
  - Difficult making changes when a business is renting their building
- Technology
  - Needs to improve to make products more affordable, and worth the investment
  - Not as efficient
- Funds
  - Low or slow ROI, and figuring out the ROI is a challenge. Understanding short-term vs. long-term costs
  - Sometimes a company has to be larger for the economics of sustainability to work.
  - Need for government incentives or rebates.
- Other
  - Feeling powerless because of the barriers

Q3.) What are some ways that our local government could support your business' efforts towards energy sustainability?

- Education
  - Seminars/webinars/workshops on how to start, ways to get it done, how to evaluate providers/programs.
  - Checklist for new businesses, and have a plan in place before the business starts.
  - Workshops featuring those with expertise, tours of successful business, roundtables for business to interact.
  - Lots of resources in the community but we don't know what others are doing



- Energy
  - Zoning & planning ordinances allow for solar on roof & ground
  - More/new EV charging stations
  - Retailers who want to offer charging stations as part of their services want to figure out/be given a way to monetize the chargers.
- Funds
  - Cost-sharing for solar with the government. Helping them with some of the upfront, low-to-no interest loans/revolving loan fund
  - Ability for group buying among businesses to help with upfront costs.
  - Tax credits or other financial incentives
  - More incentives for Green jobs, and technically qualified people
  - Help finding out what local, state, & federal incentives are available.
- Marketing
  - Promote the sustainability efforts other businesses and industries are already doing
  - Highlighting sustainability not as a “green” initiative, but good for business & economical. “Green” has been overused and rebranded will appeal to others who may not be as interested in this issue.
- Other
  - Need landlords to be involved
  - Partnering to expand the Purple Pipe initiative that carries recycled water that can be used for irrigation and industrial use
  - Potential to sell to other, nearby businesses for non-potable use.
  - How to retain/treat stormwater in a cost-effective way, want to know more about low water use landscaping, and what native plants to use.
  - Explore opportunities for zero waste going to landfills.

Q4.) What are some strategies that you would caution our local government against implementing to meet the 100% Clean & Renewable Energy commitment, and why?

- Adopt policies for implementation that have cost effective measures.
  - Has to make economic sense
  - Make sure to include education around the economics
  - Help businesses understand how to approach from a cost savings perspective.
- Don't create a plan and process that is punitive
- Some current zoning requirements can be a deterrent. Have options/avenues to take business and industry viewpoints into consideration
- Don't have too harsh restrictions or zoning for residential neighborhoods.
- County has been extremely progressive in the area of waste. Please don't back off on that.
- Don't pick winners and losers. Businesses are also taxpayers and contribute in various ways.
  - Get buy in from ALL and from a large spectrum of people
- Important to be positioned to be able to pivot over time and in a way that is sustainable over time for the businesses.
- Acknowledge that every technology has pros and cons, so even green technology has drawbacks

Q5.) What are the long-term concerns you have, if any, about efforts toward ACC's 100% Clean & Renewable Energy Commitment?

- Needs to be cost effective
- Too harsh restrictions
- Lack of communication and education about what the plan really will do for businesses and the community
- Ensure community involvement. People want the opportunity to shape what efforts like this look like for their business and community.



Q6.) What partnership opportunities would you like to see expanded or started involving the business community and local government?

- Education
  - More education around utility conservation efforts.
    - Expansion of Purple Pipe Project.
    - Understanding what does sustainable energy look like.
  - Implement periodic check-ins with the business community.
    - Post-covid, have meetings in person to meet govt officials & other businesses.
    - Quarterly workshops
  - Understanding what questions to ask, and what partnering opportunities are available with ACCUG.
    - Centralized resource to learn about and understand how to access local, state, federal resources and incentives for sustainability
    - Would like to partner to get ACCGov to gain guidance of the process that a company needs to go through to redevelop sites.
    - More education and resources on what has the great impact and cost savings
    - Helps identifying/apply rebates for businesses
- Continue to be Supportive
  - Local government has been very supportive, helpful, and approachable
  - Athens has a great local govt.
- Cross Industry Sharing
  - Business & Industry Roundtables
  - Learn how others have had success and share process. E.g installing solar, along with other energy initiatives. Learn what are the low-hanging fruit with sustainability
  - Creates business to business peer pressure & facilitate opportunities for businesses to work together
- Block buying power
  - Partnering with a local business to pilot sustainability programs. Show the benefits for local businesses & share feedback
- Other
  - Expand our recycling options
  - Promotion of high efficiency residential and commercial HVAC and monitoring units
  - Developing technical talent in the area to help feed the businesses
  - Roof spaces and solar energy options. If there's a way to partner with utility providers.
  - Understanding local and university resources that can help them with ideas and expertise.
  - EV charging stations increase

#### **CAB Feedback**

- Tom Lawrence
  - There was some interest in / discussion of purple pipes, waste, etc. Would encourage us to continue to focus on *energy*, not sustainability in general.

#### Community Organizations 1:1 Report-Outs

Q1.) Please tell us about any energy-related sustainability efforts that your company currently has underway, in planning stages, or may be considering.

- Always trying to reduce energy costs.
- Applied for solar panels, but did not receive the grant
- Working on a 10-15 year energy plan.
- UGA students and GPC did energy assessments



Q2.) If your business is not currently engaged in energy sustainability efforts, what are some of the barriers or considerations that have prevented you so far?

- Hard to budget for these expenses.
- Understanding and justify ROI.

Q3.) What are some ways that our local government could support your business' efforts towards energy sustainability?

- Educational workshops for the organization and the communities they serve around energy efficiency
- A list of existing programs that ACCGov provides.
  - Struggle to coordinate all of the pieces in order to benefit from a program/service.
- Financial benefits and ROI
- Computer literacy can be an issue. Having alternative education sources.
  - Strong channels for outreach include the newspaper, The Flagpole, and bus ads.

Q4.) What are some strategies that you would caution our local government against implementing to meet the 100% Clean & Renewable Energy commitment, and why?

- Avoid unfunded mandates. Do not require us to meet certain energy efficiency standards without providing resources to help them do so.

Q5.) What are the long-term concerns you have, if any, about efforts toward ACC's 100% Clean & Renewable Energy Commitment?

- Implementing things that would accidentally hurt our constituents. We don't know what we don't know
- Members have a lot of mistrust/anxiety about services being offered, and are often in vulnerable situations. How do you know who is a good resource and who is not?

Q6.) What partnership opportunities would you like to see expanded or started involving the business community and local government?

- Working with utility providers to help bridge the gap from energy programs to programs for home repairs and other necessary service
- Include the community in conversations, input opportunities, education sessions, etc. will be powerful engagement opportunity.

#### Electricity Providers 1:1 Report Out

Still ongoing, with no themes to report just yet.

- Have only met with Georgia Power thus far.
- Have reached out to Jackson EMC & Walton EMC, and have pending requests for meetings

#### Community Survey Update

- Thank you to everyone who provided feedback on the community survey.
- The community survey is a key early step in the stakeholder process, as the survey's findings will help inform the contents and framing of ACCGov's community conversations and public-facing materials.
- The survey will gauge public views on:
  - Community values in shaping the Plan
  - Level of support for the clean energy target to date
  - Views on clean energy sources
  - Prioritization of clean energy policy and program areas

#### Upcoming Town Halls

Objectives:

1. Provide information to the public on ACCUG's 100% Clean & Renewable Energy goal



2. Respond to questions from the public on progress and future plans
3. Gather feedback from the public on community priorities in clean energy planning

Structure:

- Will be open to the public and have a broader focus than the Charrettes
- All meetings will be virtual
  - Only the presenters will have video. Attendees will only have audio.
- Meetings are scheduled for different days of the week, including a Saturday, at a variety of times to enable board participation.

Agenda overview:

- Athens 100% Clean & Renewable Energy Action Planning (30 min)
  - Plan History
  - Athens' Commitment
  - Clean Energy in Athens
  - Why Clean Energy?
- Advanced Clean Energy Scenario (ACES) Energy Modeling (10 min)
- Q & A (40 min)
- Conclusion (10 min)
- Preview of agenda:
  - History
    - ACCUG's commitment to sustainability
    - Sustainability Office
    - SPLOST Funding
    - Community Energy Fund
  - Athens Commitment
    - ACCUG's commitment to sustainability
    - Sustainability Office
    - SPLOST Funding
    - Community Energy Fund
  - Clean Energy in Athens
    - Energy burden & other impacts
    - Athens-specific examples
      - ACCGov
      - Business
      - Community
  - Why Clean Energy
    - Economics
    - Equity
    - Environment
  - Advanced Clean Energy Scenario (ACES) Energy Modeling (10 min)
    - Energy Baseline
    - "Business As Usual" Scenario
    - 100% Clean Energy Scenario
    - Jobs opportunities
    - Health impacts
    - Savings impacts
  - Q & A (40 min)
    - Different than charrette breakouts
    - Heavier usage of "chat" function to encourage questions.
    - Attendees can also submit questions during registration



#### CAB Town Hall Agenda Feedback

- Anything glaringly missing from the agenda?
- Anything you would want to ensure is included in the slides?
- Other feedback?

#### Dates & Times

- Thursday, April 8th- 6:30pm- 8:00pm
- Saturday, April 10th- 1:30pm-3:00pm
- Monday, April 19th- 11:30am-1:00pm
- Thursday, April 22nd- 6:30pm-8:00pm
- Tuesday April 27th-11:30am-1:00pm

#### Advertising Platforms

- ACCA Newsletter
- ACCGov
- ACCGov OS
- ACC OS Facebook Page
- ACCGov Partner Departments
- CAB Members Networks
- Commissioners (Clerks)
- Email Charrette Invitees
- Flagpole
- Online Athens
- Red and Black
- WGAU 98.7
- WUGA 91.7
- WUOG 90.5
- WXAG 92.7

#### **CAB Feedback**

- Amy Kissane
  - Would like to get preview of slides prior to first Town Hall.
- John Newland, Amy Kissane
  - Asks for resources for social media sharing.
  - Project Team to share these as follow-up.

#### Upcoming Town Halls – CAB Support

- Share the Meeting Information
  - Help spread the word about the Town Halls throughout your networks
    - Social, newsletters, flyers.
    - Go on air (radio/tv) to promote the meetings?
- Attend the Town Halls
  - Our goal is to have at least 1-3 CAB members at each meeting. All are welcome.
  - Please let us know if you are planning to attend

#### CAB Follow-Up Reminders

##### Community Survey

- Please help push the survey throughout your networks

##### Town Halls

- Please share the meetings in your network
- Attend the Town Halls and let us know if you would like to present



### **CAB Feedback (General)**

- Tom Lawrence
  - Interested in radio spot.
- Michael Songster
  - Community survey – do we have a target number of respondents?
    - Megan O’Neil: Will check w/ Matt Cox at Greenlink Analytics.
  - Will we use Commissioners’ newsletters?
    - Mike Wharton: Yes.
- Amy Kissane
  - Interest in update on HB 150.
    - Bailey Shea: House Bill 150, currently in the Georgia General Assembly, will come for a vote on the Senate Floor during this legislative session.
    - Megan O’Neil: We will share a legislative update in the next meeting.

### Conclusion

#### Key Takeaways

- Summarized business & community organization 1:1’s
- Reviewed community survey updated
- Introduction to upcoming Town Halls
- CAB engagement reminders

#### Objectives for April Meeting

- Report feedback from Town Hall to date
- Share preliminary thoughts on Plan outline based on Town Hall feedback
- Plan development & Workplan look-ahead
- Community Survey updates