

Partners for a Prosperous Athens
Economy Sub-Committee
August 28, 2006

- 1) Feedback on "Poverty in Athens: What We Have Learned"
 - a. Hard to capture everything, so much more at every stage
 - b. Living wage- document doesn't say why we need it
 - i. You can have a job, but if it doesn't pay well it leads to all the other problems being discussed in the other Sub-committees
 - c. Wish every manager would wake up and think "How can I show more respect to my workers"
 - d. Have a mentor program in schools, but adults/parents could use mentors too- workforce mentors- soft skills
 - e. Document does not make connections on the issues- showing up on time is a function of having no sick-child care, transportation, health care, living wage
 - f. Racism and Classism- are pulled out as a recurring theme, but really an underlying part of economic development. Flag this for discussion and more info, not just discussing it in regards to impact but as a cause of poverty
 - g. \$5.15 is too little- need to focus on income
 - h. Look at different levels of income within University of Georgia and hospitals, not just compared to other industry
 - i. Document doesn't talk about how we get funders to this conversation- what is the plan
 - j. Race and wealth- look at the effects on racism going back generations, not just today. The history of red-lining and other practices has created generational barriers to wealth that are still playing out.
 - k. Look into Individual Development Accounts
 - l. With recommendations like a Living Wage- if we go forward, we need good info, we also need to know if UGA, the hospitals, and others are willing to do this? Otherwise this is exercise is just blowing smoke
 - m. City and County subsidize employers who aren't paying living wages- we need to get the data how much tax money is paying for infrastructure, etc.
 - n. We have made progress
 - o. Long-term process so need both short-term and long-term goals
 - p. What could employers do to employ people from within ACC
 - q. How much subsidy is there already available?
 - r. Document doesn't really address Lack of Hope- need to maintain positive hope, group energy here is hopeful- need to build that- now hope ends before youth even get to High School
 - s. Need to look at Teen Pregnancy and Drug Abuse
- 2) Entrepreneurship Sub-subcommittee
 - a. Need a focus on creativity and inspiration
 - i. Gospel Pilgrim Cemetery is a good example- it's a heritage cemetery being revitalized by EADC with SPLOST, needs volunteers and

financial support, there is also a program to connect to the stories through ipod and voicemail

- b. Setting Priorities-
 - i. Training youth and adults in business skills
 - 1. work with schools, work with Athens Tech
 - 2. hard skills and soft skills
 - 3. financial literacy
 - ii. Building hope in youth and adults
 - 1. create exposure to opportunities
 - 2. mentoring, shadowing from small business owners
 - 3. would address racism in a constructive framework
 - iii. Gather and publicize information on existing small business development resources
 - iv. Address institutional barriers to starting small businesses
 - 1. Talk to employers/ need info from Chamber members and non-members
 - 2. Disconnect between training programs, employees, and employers/ may not even have the training programs
 - 3. Expand definition of Economic Development to focus on small businesses and sustainable community development
 - a. Look at growing own industry not just retaining or attracting new
 - b. Look at start ups
 - c. Look at taking small businesses to the next level
 - i. Small business owners no able to pay themselves living wage- want discussion of how to tie into a living wage
 - v. Look for successful communities who do a good job of supporting ages 0 – working
- 3) Economic Development Sub-subcommittee
- a. What can we do to get higher paying jobs?
 - i. Coordination at a Regional level for Economic Development
 - 1. Joint Marketing
 - 2. Funding
 - 3. Inadequate in Attracting Industry
 - 4. Inadequate for Retention and Expansion of existing businesses
 - 5. Too dependent on UGA and Others
 - ii. UGA is recession proof
 - iii. Businesses do not locate where there is an unskilled labor force
 - iv. Better marketing of Tech Schools and their benefits
 - v. High School tech programs like N.C.
 - b. What else do we need to know?
 - i. Who are the underpaid and why?
 - ii. What should we offer in terms of skills?
 - iii. What can/should we attract?

- iv. What will ACC support?
 - v. Why did we lose Novartis?
 - c. Who do we need to talk to:
 - vi. Athens Tech?
 - 1. Offerings
 - 2. # Turned away/waiting lists
 - 3. How using Facilities
 - 4. What do you need/ What would you spend money on
 - vii. UGA
 - 1. What areas are they tops in?
 - 2. What businesses fits in with these areas
 - viii. Navy School
 - 1. BRAC Folks- Who, What, When, and Where
- 4) Living Wage Sub-subcommittee
- a. We hope for at least one Change Paper on living wages. Much of the knowledge and research are in this committee room, but the scope of research should be wide (e.g. including comparisons to other communities' efforts and actions)
 - b. We hope for Community Conversations with large employers and institutions and with workers
 - c. One Recurring Theme: A living wage needs to be established in Athens.
 - i. Note that the figure presented in the Learnings document is not set in stone- a discussion of wage figures and the reasons behind them would be part of change paper(s) on this topic.
 - d. Two Learnings to address: 1) Race needs to become part of this discussion, 2) Research Community Benefits Agreements- wages are part of economic development considerations (www.goodjobsfirst.org)
 - e. General Discussion
 - i. Question of inflation if living wage is instituted (i.e. prices for goods and services going up)
 - ii. Raise issue of declining middle class
 - 1. Can we link the large poverty issue with the pressure on the black middle class in particular
 - 2. Can we explain links between poverty and income generally?
 - iii. Change Paper topics: compare to other communities' efforts
 - iv. Recurring themes: education; closing the skill gap
 - v. Who are we targeting? UGA is central because it dominates the local economy but all workers are important
- 5) Culture of Poverty
- a. Lack of Hope
 - i. Lack of positive influences
 - ii. No structure in Home
 - iii. What is personality of poverty:
 - 1. Oppression

- 2. No options (sense of)
 - 3. Judged (pre-judged)
 - iv. Preparation for Life skills
 - v. Core values lacking
- b. Education (Re emphasize as a pathway)
 - i. Student to Parent to Workforce
 - ii. Teen Parenthood/Pregnancy
 - 1. Children raising children
 - 2. Dependent Care
 - 3. Healthcare
 - 4. Prevention
 - 5. Lack of Positive Influence
 - 6. Escape
 - 7. Mentors
 - 8. Drugs
- c. Job Coach/Adult Mentoring
 - i. Authority issues
 - ii. Soft skills focuses
 - iii. Respecting Others
 - 1. Employers
 - 2. Employees
 - iv. Employers explain bottom line to employees
 - v. TANF as a work program