

OneAthens Affordable Housing Initiative
Implementation Team Meeting
July 31, 2007
7:00-9:30PM, Fanning Institute

Present from Team: Tom Rodgers (Chair), Heather Benham (Athens Land Trust), Rick Parker (Athens Housing Authority), Malisa Thompson (GA Dept. of Community Affairs), Susan Bogardus (BB&T), Alvin Sheats (Hancock Community Development Corporation), Anne Sweaney (UGA FCS), Larry Hill (Habitat for Humanity), Sister Margarita Martin (Oasis Catolico), Patty Freeman-Lynde (Social Worker), Courtney Davis (Athens Area Homeless Shelter), Andy Herod (ACC Commission), Mable Mitchell (Prudential)

- I. Tom welcomed everyone and made introductions. Team made corrections to the minutes from 7-16-07. Minutes with corrections were approved.
- II. Team voted to adopt the 10 recommendations drafted by the Affordable Housing Developers Group. These recommendations are consistent with the Housing Team's Product #4 of identifying strategies to immediately increase affordable housing supply. The Team agreed that more detail needed to be outlined, but that working regionally; working with private, nonprofit, and governmental organizations; and working with targeted income ranges would help make the recommendations most effective. The 10 recommendations are listed below.
- III. The Team is creating concrete requests for the 5 Co-conveners and community to implement. The OneAthens Housing Team has agreed to the following:
 1. Ask ACC about participating in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing
 2. The inclusion of the above 10 recommendations as part of the Housing Team's Product.
 3. Complete an assessment of affordable housing demand through employers.
- IV. Team would like to further explore:
 1. A definition of Affordable Housing for the community.
 2. Adding the allowance of manufactured housing in the zoning ordinances and preserving existing manufactured housing parks as part of the Rehab/Reuse Existing Multi Family recommendation.
 3. Creating a coordinated and consolidated effort for housing counseling, credit repair, financial literacy, and foreclosure prevention in ACC.
 4. Adding financial literacy to the High School curriculum throughout ACC.
 5. Exploring the pros and cons of the Rental Assistance Rehab Program.
- V. Next Meetings: Tuesday, August 14th 7-9pm.

10 Recommendations Adopted by the OneAthens Housing Team

1. Revise Zoning Ordinance to provide density bonuses for affordable units
 - a. Incentive to include a modest number of affordable units within new developments (need to further define “affordable” and number of units)
 - b. Promotes private developer participation
 - c. Benefits developer by lowering land costs through higher density
 - d. Way to achieve mixed-income
2. Address Regulatory Obstacles
 - a. Expedited permitting process
 - b. Simplified codes/design guidelines for in-fill
 - i. Set-backs
 - ii. Lot size
 - iii. Parking
 - c. Flexible variance process
 - d. Incentives for private developers to partner with public & non-profit developers
3. ACC In-kind Incentives
 - a. Infrastructure improvements
 - i. Sewer, water, etc
 - ii. Streets, sidewalks, etc.
 - b. Waive Fees
 - i. Inspection fees
 - ii. Permit
 - iii. Plan review
 - iv. Variances
 - v. Water & Sewer taps
4. Reduce Taxes
 - a. Temporary waiver for non-profit developers- when taxes continue to build on undeveloped land as the developer prepares to build, the cost is passed on to the purchaser
 - b. Differential for affordable rental
 - c. Homeowner Property Tax Relief
 - d. Freeze for low-income elderly
 - e. Raise & index Homestead exemption
 - f. Adjust income thresholds
5. Rehab/Reuse Existing Multi-Family
 - a. Lack of available, properly zoned land
 - b. Existing properties are aging and deteriorating
 - c. High vacancies as properties age
 - d. Quality of life issues
 - e. Acquisition, rehab & management by non-profits
 - f. Use tax-advantaged financing
6. Provide Local Funding
 - a. Federal funds are flat or shrinking
 - b. Many outside funds require match

- c. Nationwide more than 300 cities/counties have housing trust funds
 - d. ACC government budget is ~ \$98M
 - e. No ACC funds go to affordable housing
 - f. AHA contributes ~ \$100K /yr in PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes)...which could go to housing
7. Innovative Financing Mechanisms
 - a. TAD incentives
 - b. Tax credits
 - c. Tax-exempt bonds
 8. Use Shared Equity Strategies
 - a. Shared appreciation
 - i. Provide long-term affordability
 - ii. Protects the public investment
 - iii. Proven tool with history in other communities
 - iv. Housing costs rising faster than incomes
 - v. Athens Land Trust
 - vi. Other shared equity models
 9. Reuse Abandoned, Vacant & Tax-delinquent Properties
 - a. Provides low-cost lots and enhances tax digest
 - b. 160 houses currently on CPD demolition list
 - c. Work with CPD and Tax Commissioner to acquire properties
 - d. Plug loopholes in local ordinance
 - e. Provide real “teeth” for enforcement
 - f. Take action to clear titles to land if appropriate
 - g. Remove hazardous properties even without reuse
 10. Employer-assisted Housing
 - a. Local government not solely responsible
 - b. Major employers, (hospitals, schools, etc.) suffer from the effects on their employees of a lack of affordable housing
 - c. Can reduce sprawl, commute times and congestion
 - d. Specific employee benefits/perks (not always \$)
 - i. Financial literacy & housing counseling
 - ii. Down-payment assistance, matches, etc.