

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL MINUTES

May 12, 2021

The Administrative Council met on Wednesday, May 12, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. in the Ballroom. Present were Dr. Rick Barth; Ms. Pam Clark, Recorder; Mr. Richard Collie; Dr. Joe Delap; Mr. Andrew Dollar; Dr. Keith Ferguson; Ms. Jackie Gooch; Mr. Jeffrey Guenther; Dr. Jim Kerner; Mr. Chris Latham, Ms. Sarah McAbee; Mr. Mike McCoy; Mr. Derrek Smith; Dr. Jackie Smith; Dr. Stephen Spencer; Dr. Lee Vartanian; Ms. Debra Vaughn; Dr. Philip Way and Dr. Lionel Wright. Ms. Laken Cleveland, SGA President; Mr. Jonathan Craft; Ms. Belinda Krigel; and Dr. Kim LaFevor were absent.

Dr. Way convened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone. He asked for any corrections to the April minutes. There were no corrections to the minutes and they were approved on a voice vote.

Dr. Way stated the focus of the meeting is the city's comprehensive plan, Athens2040. Dr. Way turned the meeting over to Dr. Delap. Dr. Delap stated that as an anchor institution, we have a primary role to play in how Athens and the region grows and prospers over the next twenty years. He presented slides on the process (Handout 1). Members were divided into four groups for discussions.

A. General Group

- Athens State's desire to be a supportive, collaborative member of the community
- Athens' benefits: Small town nature; family atmosphere; small college town; lower cost of living, talent recruitment
- Athens' needs: More quality of life amenities, night life, dog park, restaurants
- Infrastructure, transportation, managed growth – Consider how the city can be inclusive of all of Limestone County's residents
- Without improved amenities – face an aging population plan for improved quality of life

B. Open Space, Housing, and Transportation Group

Open Space

- Pilgrim's Pride development
- Beasley Field – underutilized
- Dog park would be nice to have
- Develop the space behind Kares Library

Housing

- 33% of students want/interested in housing
- Flexible housing for short-term stays for students who need to come to the main campus for a short period of time

- How do we smooth the pipeline for traditional age students coming to Athens State from community colleges?
- Lots of faculty live away from Athens: Why do they choose to live in other communities?
- Limited availability of housing for students
- Lack of housing in middle price ranges

Transportation

- Multimodal pathways – pedestrians, bikes, skateboards, one wheels
- Bus between Calhoun Community College and Athens State (“31 Bus”)
- Greater walkability and connection to downtown – Hobbs Street is dangerous to cross (no well-marked crosswalk)

C. Equity and Character Group

Character – What is Athens State’s role in defining the character of Athens?

- We are a community clearinghouse for civic engagement, lifelong learning and cultural activities
- We support and provide cultural opportunities and events that enrich the community
- How does the university address the tension between “small town” Athens and the future Athens?
- What is our role in addressing perceptions – outside people
- We have space, expertise and resources to help the city address and facilitate initiatives
- Our contribution to the arts, e.g., music events, conferences, and other cultural artistic activities. A center for these activities.

Equity – What is Athens State’s role in making Athens more equitable?

- We can help define equity for our community
- We have the opportunity to model DEI in the community
- Through the CLL, we can work with businesses to support Athens and Limestone County students with scholarships

D. Growth and Economy Group

Growth/Development – What areas of development should Athens State help grow and maintain in the City of Athens?

- Strengthen workforce
- Business incubation initiatives
- K-12 mentoring (students, teachers, administrators)
- Workshops, conferences, professional development
- Cultural development
- Revenue and tourism (Fiddlers Convention)

- Community awareness – an e-mail or other marketing “blast” going out which tells what is happening on campus

Economy/Employment – Are there industries/businesses that Athens State should look at to better support in Athens?

- Athens City Schools
- Small businesses (incubator)
- Project-based experiential learning opportunities related to industrial parks – meeting with business leaders to see what role we can play
- Carter Hall remodeling as civic center (funding?) – revenue and exposure for the community

Dr. Delap thanked everyone for their feedback. He asked each member to complete a survey that will be sent via email. He stated that he will report the responses to the Athens 2040 leadership. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Pamela Clark

Handout 1: “On The Table” PowerPoint Presentation



Your Voice Matters

In Athens we know big ideas can spring from small conversations and people invest in what they help create. When we come together as a community to listen to and learn from each other, we have the power to impact both neighborhoods and lives.

That's what Athens 2040 On the Table is all about.

Athens 2040

Athens 2040 is the Comprehensive Plan update process. A Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that details the City's long-term vision and goals, and outlines the steps necessary to achieve them. The plan provides a framework for addressing issues and opportunities pertaining to growth and development. This On The Table process will occur in conjunction with the Athens 2040 planning process and will help inform the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

If you want to have a conversation around specific topics, we've compiled a list of sample conversation prompts around some of the elements that are typically addressed in a Comprehensive Plan. There's no need to start with the first question or to take them in order.



ECONOMY / EMPLOYMENT

1. What do you think of the economy in Athens?
2. What types of businesses would you like to see in Athens?
3. Discuss strengths and weaknesses of Athens economy.
4. Are there industries in Athens that you would like to see expanded?

GROWTH/DEVELOPMENT

1. Discuss what you think of growth in Athens.
2. What types of development would you like to see in Athens?
3. What areas should grow and what areas should be maintained?
4. Discuss good and bad examples of development in Athens.

TRANSPORTATION

1. How do you travel around Athens? Do you drive, use public transportation, walk, bike?
2. What are strengths and weaknesses of public transportation in Athens?
3. How could the transportation network be improved in Athens?
4. Discuss any issues with roadways, sidewalks, bike lanes and how they could be improved.

OPEN SPACE / NATURAL AREAS

1. Are open spaces/parks/natural areas important to you?
2. What are strengths and weaknesses of parks/open space in Athens?
3. Are there natural areas of Athens that should be preserved?
4. Are there areas in Athens that are lacking in parks/open space?

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

1. What are defining features of the character of Athens?
2. What do you like about the character of Athens?
3. Are there improvements that could be made to the character of Athens?
4. How important is it that the Comprehensive Plan preserve the character of Athens?

EQUITY

1. What does equity mean to you?
2. Do you think that Athens is an equitable city?
3. Is equity an important concern to you?
4. What improvements could be made to make the City more equitable?

HOUSING

1. What types of housing would you like to see in Athens?
2. What types of housing do you not want to see in Athens?
3. How important do you think it is to provide a mix of housing types?
4. Is Athens meeting the housing needs for everyone?



Wrapping Up

After Your Conversation

It's never been more important in our City for people to come together. Sharing – and listening – to our neighbors is an important first step toward creating a shared vision for the future of our City.

Send Your Guests the Survey Link

To ensure each participant receives the [survey link](#), be sure to have your guests complete the sign-in sheet with their name and email address. At the end of your conversation, take a picture of the sign-in sheet and upload on the project website at: Athens2040.com

Share What Happened

We'd like to know the outcomes of your discussion and showcase conversations during the Athens 2040 process. Share your success stories, challenges, and ideas with us:

- Post a comment on social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) using **#Athens2040**
- Email Lakeisha Johnson at ljohnson@athensai.us
- Upload your meeting notes at: Athens2040.com

Note: All meeting notes will be made public via the Athens 2040 website, but we won't be publishing what any particular participant said.

Thank Your Guests

A day or two after your discussion is over, thank your guests for attending your conversation and send them the [survey link](#) and information for future input opportunities listed on the website.

**Thank you for participating in On the Table.
Your conversation is just the beginning.**



Host Notes

Use this page to jot down a few ideas you want to share from your table.

What are the most important topics discussed at your table?

What are some of your group's big ideas?

Notes:



Snap a pic!

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