

Advisory Committee Meeting  
January 22, 2024  
6 p.m.

The original agenda was to have a speaker on Tennessee Sunshine Laws.

However, the City Manager's office has invited many others, including this committee, to have a virtual meeting on 2/1/2024.

After conversations with the City Manager and the Mayor, the suggestion was to get ideas from the committee on what topics are important to Athens for the City Council Strategic Meeting. The Strategic meeting will be held on February 15<sup>th</sup> beginning at 9 a.m. All are invited to attend.

Attendance report is attached for 2023 and this first meeting for 2024.

There were a lot of ideas and open discussion.

- **Industrial Growth** (we should have Lindsay Ferguson, Director of EDA to the next meeting).
- **Infrastructure**; we know we need another Fire Dept to support the growth of Athens. Need a plan to get and retain Police officers
- **Homeless and mental health**---Plan to use former schools? Or old motels? Need a place that is walkable, access to pharmacy, food, new job training, financial guidance, showers---*all in this discussion realize this is a very large project that needs major assistance.* We know there are many 501-C agencies working on this major project. What can be done to co-ordinate and make it successful.
- When Retail Strategies (40K) was not renewed—what are the plans for new restaurants—other amenities to keep citizens stay here—or new ones to move here? Has this money been used in other ways to create new restaurants?
- What needs to be done at the Regional Center to make it a place to hold more functions—bring more people to Athens?
- *More Communication to the citizens of Athens* --- update the Website, add the 2024 Goals of the City, strategies, topics of discussion--- what is going on with the empty schools, pickle ball courts, new business when all paperwork has been signed. Make an announcement so there are no speculations about what is going on in the space i.e., new coffee place coming to Belk's Plaza.
- Since the Snow was “fresh” on everyone's mind—maybe a plan for plow trucks.
- Paving- stay with the plan and not “move around” stay in the area and finish the streets that need the paving.
- Discuss City ordinances and how they work.

- We all agreed how the Fire Chief and his “team” are always out in the field and seen in such a positive manner. Chief Ainsworth reports monthly on how much training is done in the department—and any other accomplishments. He shows how well they all work hard, train hard and make Athens #1.
- Police Dept—concerned how that dept is not growing. Plus, what can be done to retain good officers. Is there consistent training for the Police Dept like the Fire Dept?
- Promote more training at the TCAT Center.
- We know there will be additional lighting at the Exits for Athens for security. What else can we do to entice visitors to stay in Athens, spend the night, buy two-three meals? Maybe larger signage to promote Historical Downtown, the TWU baseball teams, that TWO walking trails are nearby—the Regional Park and Eureka Trail.
- Beautification for Downtown---we need more “curb appeal” –consistent plantings and trimming of the shrubs and trees.
- More training for all families to Spay & Neuter their pets.

The other item on the agenda was to vote for a chairperson for 2024.

Two names were nominated: Anne Marie Shaffer and Patti Greek.

Votes were counted twice by Bob Roseberry & Perry McDermott

7 Anne Marie

11 Patti Greek (I didn't vote—I was making sure everyone had a ballot and it was counted.)

Next Schedule meetings for 2024:

April 22, 2024

July 15, 2024

October 21, 2024

Due to the larger group, I suggest we should be moved to the City Council room.