

# Athens City Council Questionnaire on Housing

This questionnaire was created by United Athens County Tenants (UACT) to better understand the Athens City Council Candidates' position on tenants/housing related issues. Information collected in this questionnaire may be used in news articles, UACT's website, and/or social media.

Please see <https://www.athenstenants.com/> or @UntiedAthensCountyTenants to learn more about our group.

What is your name? \*

Ben Ziff

Please select one of the following. I am a... \*

- Renter
- Owner only of a home, which you occupy.
- Landlord
- Other: .....

What housing issues do you see as the most pressing to tenants in Athens City? \*

I think affordability, as well as quality of housing, are definitely two of the major issues for a lot of renters in town.

How do you plan to increase renters' rights and tenant wellbeing in the city of Athens? \*

I want to change the language of current city ordinance to require 24 hours notice before a landlord can enter an occupied, rented home. Emergency maintenance would of course be allowed, but regular maintenance or inspection needs to require 24 hours. One of my best friends had a maintenance man attempt to enter her apartment while she was in the shower, unannounced. For what I would hope are extremely obvious reasons, this is completely unacceptable.

What steps will you take to support Athenians' access to homes, especially for under resourced households? \*

I hope that the new construction taking place by 682/luhrig road will be a major benefit for a lot of under resourced households!

Including community recommendations when developing policies and programs is a best practice for effective and lasting solutions. How will you include those impacted by housing needs in developing and implementing housing solutions? \*

I would include these individuals by...well, including them. It doesn't seem to me that it is too hard to talk to people, and I am ALWAYS willing and wanting to listen. People living in circumstances like that often can see some of the most needed solutions.

Would you support a "Pay to Stay" ordinance, where a landlord may not proceed with the eviction for nonpayment of rent if that tenant presents the full rent due plus late fees by the time of the eviction hearing. \*

Yes

No

Other: .....

Please explain why or why not. \*

It seems like the whole issue in that case, would be lack of payment. So...if the tenant pays the rent...why should they be evicted at that point? This seems very cut and dry, haha!

Would you support a "Just Cause Eviction" ordinance? "Just cause" (or "good cause") eviction policies promote residential stability by limiting the grounds upon which a landlord may evict a tenant; typically, allowable grounds for eviction include nonpayment of rent, intentional damage to the unit, or other material noncompliance with the terms of the lease. \*

Yes

No

Other: .....

Please explain why or why not. \*

People shouldn't be able to be evicted because a landlord doesn't like them, or something like that. I would be hard pressed to see other reasons other than lack of payment, damaging the unit, not abiding by the lease, or perhaps constantly flaunting city code or menacing the neighbors, that would be truly justifiable reasons to evict someone. ....

Would you support relocation assistance for tenants? This is a policy where landlords must pay relocation expenses for tenants forced to leave units condemned by the Department of Code Enforcement. \*

Yes

No

Other: .....

Please explain why or why not. \*

If a building falls below the required standard for healthy and safe living, then it is 100% the owner of that building's responsibility to assist the people living there in finding new accommodations, and pay for that relocation. It isn't a tenants' fault if a building is slowly degrading to the point of dangerous living conditions. Two friends of mine just recently had to leave their apartment halfway into their lease, because major repairs had to be performed. Their landlord found them a new place to live, at no additional cost, and even helped them move. THAT, is the kind of example more people should strive to be like. ....

Do you have experience working to change city policy prior to holding office? If so, what? And were your efforts successful or not? \*

Prior to being nominated on to city council in May, no, I did not have any experience with this! We've all sat around in bars and complained to each other about the problems we see, but until now, I've definitely let myself sit on the sidelines. Not anymore! I've really enjoyed my time on council thus far, and am excited to implement more changes!

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