

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? *

Micah McCarey

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? *

A pressing housing issue for our Athens community to address include improving the availability of quality, affordable rental options (i.e., where quality is not only offered by property managers at the time of signing, but is also reliably maintained with increased efficacy of City Code Enforcement regarding inspections). Additionally, improvements are needed to strengthen tenet rights to privacy. I support prohibiting and penalize unannounced inspections or intrusions by property managers/owners that are not covered under the terms of the rental lease.

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

If elected, I would enjoy the opportunity to work closely with and to learn from the United Athens County Tenants (UACT). Having met with some of its dedicated members just once during the summer of 2021, I can think of no better structured group of stakeholders with complimentary strengths to offer data-informed recommendations and help drafting improvements for tenant wellbeing.

Concerning tenant health, safety, and rental repair needs, I believe incentivizing and publicizing Code Compliance issues increases instances of timely response to tenant needs that otherwise go unaddressed by property managers/owners. It seems there are no shortage of specific system failures local tenants can share to help us analyze and identify the necessary system improvements.

Regarding tenant wellness, I favor biannual assessments of tenant wellness (as informed by their living conditions) through quantitative survey methods and qualitative data-mining of facilitated community dialogue, some of which the UACT might be best positioned to host. I see this plugging into larger community health and wellness initiatives I'm engaged with, such as the OhioHealth's Community Health Needs Assessment Prioritization of Health Needs for Athens County. If there are city or county-level resources that can further support tenant wellness and quality management of rentals that might be helpful, I'll be well-positioned to facilitate collaborations.

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

I'd also be happy to support the important work of our City's important Affordable Housing Commission as I understand this is a complex issue perpetuated by the trouble of identifying appropriate areas for new developments. New, affordable apartment complexes are helpful, but I recognize transportation options need to improve to support under-resourced households that might otherwise struggle if they don't live near enough to places they need to go.

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? *

Including community recommendations when developing policies and programs matters for many reasons. Engaging stakeholders in honest, transparent, understandable dialogue creates opportunities for formally tracking and responding to questions, concerns, and suggestions. I value transparency, so when suggestions aren't taken-up, I favor providing written rationales that are made publicly available and are analyzed for themes. Additionally, I embrace an intersectional lens in planning and decision-making processes, which drives me to deliberately seek out and include the perspectives of those most impacted by forms of oppression such as classism, ableism, and racism. Their experiences can help us plan and design to serve people's needs we might not consider if those needs are different from our own.

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. *

Generally, I would support a "Pay to Stay" ordinance on principal of providing due legal process. However, extended periods of time between eviction notice and eviction hearings (along with other scenarios) would complicate this, creating a likely need to build restrictions into such an ordinance. I'm presently more aware of benefits to Pay to Stay ordinances than I am aware of associated risks and problems, so I would welcome further research and community dialogue around this topic.

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. *

Just Cause Eviction ordinances help limit instances of illegal housing discrimination masked as lease violations. I'm presently more aware of benefits to Just Cause Eviction ordinances than I am aware of associated risks and problems, so I would welcome further research and community dialogue around this topic.
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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. *

I support relocation assistance for situations in which tenants must relocate due to a preexisting or emergent facility issue with the rental property, such as asbestos removal, electrical problems, or plumbing problems (those not brought-on by natural hazards outside human control).

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 appointed as an At-Large member of Athens City Council in June of 2021, I contributed to the work of the Racial Equity Coalition of Athens County and the Athens Community Relations Commission, both of which have successfully advocated for written commitments to social justice, anti-racism, and non-discrimination.

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