



**Quarterly Large Group Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 15, 2022, 9:00am-10:30 a.m.
Greenville Convention Center, Room 203**

1. Welcome (Bryan Brown)

2. Introduction (Travis Wharton)

- a. The greatest barrier to economic mobility is housing, and our history of racial segregation and systemic discrimination has had an incredibly detrimental effect on our community in Greenville.
 - i. Data shows that individuals born in poverty in Greenville County have a 4.7% likelihood of achieving financial stability. African Americans born into poverty have only a 2.6% likelihood of achieving stability—the statistic is only 1.9% for African American males.
 - ii. In order to improve the equity of our systems in Greenville County, we need to take responsibility and be deliberate in identifying intentionally inequitable barriers, specifically related to housing for GAHC's purposes.
- b. Segregation practices still have direct effects on what our community looks like today. Even though schools were desegregated, communities were not and that left African American families with limited access to services, opportunities, and amenities such as schools, computer labs, after-school activities, and enrichment activities like art and music. The layout of our communities and services today reflects those decades of discrimination.

3. Racially Restricted Covenant Research (Sam Hayes)

- a. The Center for Applied Sustainability Research at the Shi Institute for Sustainable Communities at Furman University has been working on a project which involves cataloguing racially restrictive covenants in Greenville County, SC. Their ultimate goal is to have data which can be applied towards strategies to make Greenville more equitable and welcoming to People of Color.
- b. The Color of Law by Richard Rothstein discusses the various tactics used to segregate communities: redlining, zoning, and intimidation. Because Greenville was too small for redlining maps to apply, racially restricted covenants were implemented to prevent People of Color from living in certain areas.
 - i. Racially restricted covenants were a contractual agreement included in a property deed which restricted a certain race or ethnicity from buying, leasing, and/or inhabiting the property.
- c. The data collected so far in Greenville County includes 8,440 total racially restricted covenants and spans 1907 to 1968.

- i. Shelley v. Kraemer in 1948 made racially restricted covenants unenforceable; they could still appear in deeds but could not be enforced. The Fair Housing Act in 1968 made it illegal to put them in the deed.
 - ii. This project is still ongoing and is expected to continue for a few more weeks, during which time more racially restricted covenants are expected to be added to the existing data.
 - iii. The data is currently recorded at the subdivision level with a focus on the developer rather than an individual level; however, that is a future project goal.
- d. The location patterns of racially restricted covenants in Greenville County can be traced in correlation with Dr. Ken Kolb's research on white flight in Greenville (presented at the first 2022 quarterly GAHC meeting). The early racially restricted covenants appear in downtown Greenville and over the decades shift into the suburbs as the white population moved away from downtown.
- e. An online map demonstrating this research will go live within a few weeks, as well as a few news articles in conjunction with Dr. Kolb's work. The Shi Institute hopes the map can be used to inform the community about historic housing segregation and inspire others to pursue housing equity in Greenville.
- f. Future goals to add to the project: racially restricted covenants in correlation with the development of highways, housing price points, and notable buildings. Another next step is to look at the demographics of current residents and overlay that with the historic context for comparison and give current residents access to the history of their own properties. The Shi Institute would also like to see the data used towards something actionable that the City, County, and/or State could do to drive equitable policies and movements.

4. Newtown Community (Rev. Stacey Mills)

- a. Mountain View Baptist Church was built in the 1920s and has had only 4 pastors in that time (Rev. Stacey Mills is the fourth). The Newtown community was built around it and once included 300-400 families. Now, only 6 families live there.
- b. The Parish House Community Development Corporation (headed by Rev. Mills, Melanie Brown, and Bogue Wallin) was established to build a network and strengthen the delivery of promises made to the Newtown Community.
 - i. The PHCDC envisions a vibrant and healthy community with improved quality of life to be achieved through addressing quality affordable housing, health and education disparities, and lack of economic opportunities, all of which impair Newtown's ability to thrive.
- c. The original housing in Newtown comprised of small, shanty-style houses, most of which were tin-roofed with wood plank siding and sat on stacked bricks. Over decades of disinvestment in the Newtown neighborhood, environmental injustice factors (an active trash burning furnace and coal-powered trains running through the 1960s were located in Newtown and polluted the air and Reedy River), and growing racial, health, and economic disparities resulted in diminished quality of life and residents left.

- d. Mountain View Baptist Church began buying the houses with a vision for improving the neighborhood and was able to purchase the first ten for \$50,000 (compared with the cost of one lot in Unity Park, which recently sold for \$1.7MM).
- e. A 6-month Master Plan has been drafted to revitalize the area of over 60 acres, which are broken into parcels primarily owned by Mountain View Baptist Church, the Stone family, and CSX Railroad/Duke Land Clean-Up.
 - i. The Master Plan is a map to help the community, landowners, developers, and the neighborhood agree on what Newtown should become and the appropriate steps to begin and implement the plan. It's important to focus on the voices of the community members as they're the marginalized party and the residents.
 - ii. Designs and schematics for the layout, houses, and businesses should be delivered within a week for next steps to take place. Amenities are built-in, as the neighborhood is bounded by the Swamp Rabbit Trail and Unity Park. Different model approaches include the Purpose-Built Model, the Cleveland Model, and the Shared Equity Model.
 - iii. Focus on stabilizing the community through schools, the church, and quality homes. Additionally, there is discussion on how to create a culturally inviting environment. How can we as a community make Newtown and Greenville as a whole feel welcoming? How do we create space for marginalized people to feel like living here is an option, and like they and their families and friends belong?
- f. The Legacy Charter School is an existing entity in the community, but Mountain View Baptist Church would like to see an early childhood education piece added. The earlier children can be reached to develop a foundation for success in economic and upward mobility, to see beyond the damage done to their parents, and to prepare them for success in the workplace, the better. Additionally, housing for school faculty could be a piece of the puzzle.
- g. Road restoration and grocery store development are essential parts of the process as well. An option besides a chain grocery store is a locally run boutique-style store.
 - i. Example: A small-town agricultural science teacher helped students build a greenhouse and a store, and then helped them establish a hydroponics system for growing food and set up a chicken coop for eggs and meat. All of their produce, eggs, and chicken are sold in their own grocery store, and the students are getting high school credit, work experience, and college credit while doing all of this.

5. Advocacy Update (Tina Belge)

- a. Housing stabilization dollars: \$2MM has been approved to GHF.
- b. County: comments submitted around unified development updates, increase density and incentives (duplexes, ADUs, and more), working with Impact Greenville as well to put in comments

- i. Having discussions with County on AH incentives
- ii. Working with other municipalities, such as Greer, on their development codes and AH incentives
- c. Next meeting with be 9/14/22 in the afternoon followed by a happy hour hosted by Affordable Upstate.

6. Adjournment