

Community Outreach and Engagement: Community Center Listening Session

Example #1

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About: This document summarizes the first community listening session organized by the Taunton Housing Authority with support from Beacon Climate Innovations and Sovations. The session aimed to collect community input on the development of a new Community Center. Key discussions included potential uses for the center, community emergency needs, and programming ideas, with a strong focus on safety and opportunities for children.

Usage Description: The listening session summary is vital for capturing the community's voice in the planning process of the new Community Center. It records the enthusiastic participation of residents and outlines their contributions towards shaping the center's offerings. This document serves as a foundational reference for integrating community feedback into future planning and ensuring the center meets the identified needs and priorities.

COMMUNITY CENTER LISTENING SESSION #1

Held on March 21, 2023

Prepared by Vanessa Fox of Sovations

SUMMARY:

Beacon Climate Innovations and [Sovations](#) helped the [Taunton Housing Authority](#) (THA) launch their first open meeting to discuss plans and gather input for a new Community Center at a housing complex that is home to 100 low-income families in the city.



About 30 folks participated. By all accounts it was an inspiring occasion for all who joined; from residents to presenters/facilitators.

Colleen Doherty presented the overall picture and updates to the Community Center Plan.



We collectively brainstormed ideas and gathered data on prospective uses for the facility, emergency needs of the community and possible programs. There was an overwhelming focus on the children – keeping them safe, giving them opportunities.



It was exhilarating to see ideas constructively built upon ideas.

As we were wrapping up, folks expressed excitement about the new center. Many volunteered to pitch in where they could: from serving on an advisory board to helping paint.

Thanks to Colleen Doherty for leading the charge, Mike Medeiros for meeting planning and set up. Also, to Kerry Rogers, THA; Nicole Campbell, THA; Sonja Britland, TMLP; Rick Ferreira, TEMA; and Moneer Azzam, Beacon Climate Innovations for leading the breakout sessions. And of course, to all the participants who provided their great ideas.





TOP TAKE-AWAY

- Residents participated, are engaged, and want to continue developing their Community Center.

PARTICIPANTS

- See appendix for a list of people who participated.

AGENDA

- Tale of Two Cities: describing the impact of community – literally life or death during the Chicago heat wave
- Introduction to resilience and sustainability
- Community Center update and distributed diagram of the building
- 4 Breakout Sessions:
 - Community Center's Uses
 - Threats to Community and Concerns
 - Emergency Needs/Community Center's Role
 - Programs: inside and outside

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES (With acknowledgements to the Cambridge Community Center Resilience Hub Business Plan)

**** Critical: Create an Advisory Board for Residents. *****

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES	ACTIONS/IDEAS
Create and Expand Financial Management and Skill Building Program	Programs on budgeting, using money wisely, and resume writing in addition, offering workshops that address the necessary skills including computer and financial literacy. For children and adults. Provide mentorship
Provide Healthy Eating Education and Programs. General Health.	Cooking classes for all ages, and as part of a cooking skills workshop, weave on the physical and psychological benefits. Pantry with healthy snacks. Kitchen for birthday parties. Health fairs: learning about your body. Food pantry. A place to go for general guidance
Provide a Gathering Space for Group Activities: Indoors and Outdoors, Structured and Unstructured	Themes are to keep kids healthy, help figure out their way in the world: mentors, career guidance, for example. Keeping kids safe. Gym, a pool table Black coaches of Boston Summer camp Community dances, movies, holiday parties, homework help, mentors/role models Adult education classes Structured programs to watch younger kids
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indoors 	Homework, help teens look for work, teen health resources, books in library in a shared area. Game, computer, and homework rooms. English classes, holiday related events. Movies. Library. Pool tables. Interpersonal skills, community dances, resilience training (clean energy, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoors 	Basketball, multiuse activities, picnic tables in the shade, swing sets, gardens
Workforce Training	Mentoring, resume writing, connections with local businesses, job fairs. Coaches.
Provide Equipment to Ensure the Care of Resident Before, During and After an Emergency	Power generators, emergency and first aid kits, water, and a place to keep warm/cool/dry. Ability to get power for oxygen, CPAP, phones, etc. Translators and sign language for the deaf. Food. Games, etc., for the kids during emergencies. Refrigeration.
	Security camera and outdoor lighting
	Ensure building is handicapped accessible
Security/Vandalism	Surveillance equipment and security personnel
Transportation Needs	Better access to all the city
Trash	Clean up
Safety	Address the high level of traffic
Others	Sustainable grants and programming. Stipends for volunteers

Our Community Priority and Next Community Center Champion



APPENDIX

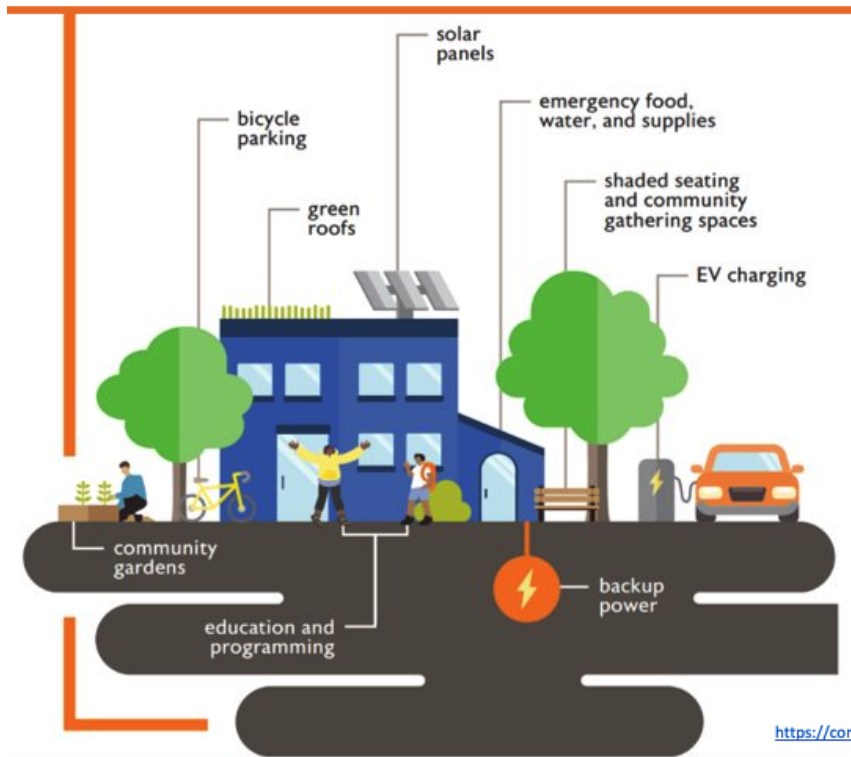
PRESS

Taunton Gazette article: Ed Baker: [Taunton Housing wants to build a community center for the whole city.](#)
[What would you like to see?](#)

LOCATION



IMAGE What You Might Find at a Clean Energy Community Resilience Hub
From: <https://communitypoweredworkshop.org/resilience-hub-network>



DRAFT ARCHITECTURAL RENDERING

