

**Affordable Housing Advisory Committee
St. Johns County, Florida
Regular Meeting**

**September 18, 2019
Minutes**

The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee of St. Johns County met at 3:00 pm in the Kingfisher Conference Room at the St. Johns County Health and Human Services Building – Housing Department, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, Florida 32084.

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 pm by Steve Ladrido, Vice Chair. Chair, Bill Lazar, took over meeting when he arrived at 3:10 pm.

Members Present:

Bill Lazar
Steve Ladrido
Tracy Hayes
Jay Kalter
Alex Mansur
Harry Maxwell
Karl Vierck

Members Absent:

Herbie Wiles
Jon Woodard

Guests Present:

Trudy Padilla
Shawna Novak, Director, Health & Human Services
Joseph Cearley, Growth Management Department
Joseph Cone, Housing & Community Services Manager
Michelle Lawlor, Housing Support Staff
Mary Garcia, Social Services Support Staff

Notices regarding the meeting were sent to all members. No press was in attendance.

- 1) Introduction of AHAC Members and SJC Staff: Committee members were acknowledged. Quorum was present.
- 2) Approval of Minutes: Motion made by Harry Maxwell to approve minutes of the August 21, 2019 meeting; motion seconded by Karl Vierck. Motion passed unanimously.
- 3) BCC – Affordable Housing Agenda Item: Joe Cone said he has had some phone calls and emails regarding the affordable housing agenda item that was pulled on what was to be the September 3rd County Commission Meeting (meeting was cancelled due to hurricane Dorian). Mr. Cone said he wanted to reassure AHAC members that the work they are doing is very important and he said the Triennial

report they are currently working on is essential for the County to continue to receive Sadowski funds. Mr. Cone also assured this AHAC that the County Commissioners are taking the matter of affordable housing very seriously and stated he and Mr. Cearley continue to answer questions about this matter posed by both Commissioners and County Administration. Mr. Cone expressed his great appreciation for the AHAC members and the time they spend working to bring affordable housing to St. Johns County. Mr. Cearley said he is unsure when the item will be put back on the agenda, as County Administration has requested more efficient market data on price points for workforce housing. Discussion ensued regarding the tremendous growth in Florida and the difficulties associated with affordable housing, not just in St. Johns County but in communities across the country. Tracy Hayes stated he has had conversations with several builders who have expressed they simply can't build single family homes affordably in St. Johns County at this time. Mr. Hayes said the focus should be on larger scale, multi-family builds. Mr. Lazar stated the density bonus, in conjunction with the obligation of just 30% to affordable housing, should be an enticement to builders. Mr. Lazar said the single family zoning in areas of the County, as well as the "not in my backyard" mentality of current homeowners, is a challenge, however. Mr. Lazar referred to the CR 210 area, in particular, and stated the homeowners there are fighting against the building of rental units. Mr. Lazar referred to the 6 acre tract of land in that area, that he stated was donated to the County and said that would be an ideal spot for a large multi-family rental but for the push-back from the nearby homeowners. Mr. Cearley said the Commissioners would prefer to see growth south of SR 16 since the schools and roadways are already at capacity in the northwest sector of the County.

Mr. Cone advised that the HFA put out a request for proposals for real estate services in order to sell the leftover properties from the CWHIP project. Mr. Cone stated the HFA received two such proposals and they will discuss at their October 24 meeting. Mr. Cone stated one proposal was for simple real estate services and the other proposal was more involved but he did not elaborate.

- 4) Triennial Report: Joe Cone said he is planning to present the Triennial Report to the Board of County Commissioners at their December 17th meeting. Mr. Cone said the public meeting will be held on November 20, which is the regularly scheduled AHAC meeting date for that month, and it will be advertised for ten business days. Mr. Cone said the report must be finalized at the October AHAC meeting and encouraged all Committee members to attend.

Mr. Cone stated he took much of what Joe Cearley discussed with the AHAC at the past several meetings and put it in the report. Mr. Cone said the Housing Coalition likes to see movement on items that are being recommended and Mr. Cone said he has indicated those items by putting them in grey on the report. Mr. Lazar said those items in grey, which have been accomplished since the last report in 2016, ought to be put at the front of the current report. The Committee agreed.

Mr. Cone asked if the Committee wanted to leave the 2nd bullet point item under incentive "b" in the report. This item addresses full impact fee and utility connection offsets of both homeownership and rental projects for income qualified buyers under

80% AMI and the Committee unanimously agreed to leave this item in the report as an important factor for such buyers/renters. Mr. Cone asked about the item referring to income fee credit program for households under 80% AMI and again, the Committee unanimously agreed to leave this item in the report. Mr. Lazar stated a significant financial subsidy will be necessary to reach people in this income bracket. Mr. Cone asked about the fourth item under incentive “b”, which would allow payment of impact and utility connection fees over a period of time, possibly paid through property tax process. The Committee agreed unanimously to leave this item in the report, as well. The last item under this incentive refers to utilization of County impact fee investment earnings on roads, parks and public buildings to support affordable housing and the Committee agreed unanimously to keep this item in the report.

Mr. Cone moved to incentive “c” and discussion ensued with regard to density bonuses outside of the designated parcel that would include paying a percentage of the value of the additional new lots into a local Housing Trust Fund. The Committee’s general consensus was developers should be required to construct affordable housing units when granted density bonuses and they asked Mr. Cone to remove the option that would allow them to pay into a housing trust fund instead. Joe Cearley requested a correction be made to the second bullet point and said it should state “Offer an affordable housing double density bonus for integrated developments of free market and market rate”. The Committee agreed.

Mr. Cone moved to incentive “d”, first bullet point and Bill Lazar said this recommendation should remain in the report and there should be a continuing conversation between the County and the City in an effort to reduce infrastructure costs. Ultimately, it was decided by the Committee that all recommendations under incentive “d” should remain.

Joe Cone stated incentive “e”, relating to Ancillary Dwelling Units, is very close to becoming an approved item by the County Commissioners and should be moved to the beginning of the report. Mr. Cone stated “f” and “g” were discussed at the last AHAC meeting and noted he added some new language to recommendation under “g”, based on discussion at August AHAC meeting. Mr. Cone asked if incentive “h” should remain as is and the Committee agreed. Mr. Cone confirmed with Committee that they are satisfied with incentives “i” and “j” and “k”.

Mr. Cone reviewed the last two pages, which include items that are not required to be on the report but rather items brought up at HFA and AHAC meetings. Mr. Cone reviewed the recommendation relating to purchase assistance and stated that, because of the sweep of the Sadowski funds, St. Johns County is not receiving enough funding to allow for this program at this time. Mr. Cone did say, however, his staff is working on policies and procedures for the program, as it is something the County might do in the future with adequate funding. Discussion ensued with regard to the third bullet point that relates to potential foreclosures on dilapidated properties. Mr. Cone said he spoke to the County attorney’s office about this matter and was advised this would be a deviation from past policy but they would be happy to send someone to discuss with the AHAC. There was much discussion regarding this recommendation and differing opinions. The majority of Committee members

ultimately decided to keep this item but to remove the wording “to potentially foreclose”. The next item considered referred to creating a record for existing structures that would qualify for reduced impact fee credit for the property and the Committee requested the one year requirement for removal of existing building be removed from this recommendation. Mr. Cone reviewed the next recommendation which refers to providing incentives to homebuilders of up to \$25,000 per unit of affordable rental with qualifying rents and low to moderate income to qualified renters. The Committee requested that Mr. Cone remove the dollar amount from this recommendation. The Committee also elected to keep the recommendation referring to water re-use requirements being waived for affordable housing in the report. Mr. Cearley said he would check with the County’s Environmental Department, as he thought they might be working on something like this. The Committee also recommended the last item be left on the report. The item refers to removal or reduced percentage rate for bond requirement for roadway improvements if it will serve affordable housing.

Bill Lazar requested a copy of the report be sent to HFA members, once Mr. Cone has completed revisions, as well as an invitation to the public meeting, which is to occur on November 20th.

Mr. Cone stated the USDA Workshop was moved to October 22 at 10:00 a.m. and will be held at the Health & Human Services Center in the Muscovy conference room. Steve Ladrido suggested this flyer be shared on social media and Mr. Cone said he will make sure this happens and send notice to the Committee when the item is up.

- 5) Recommendation Update and Current Vacancy: Ms. Garcia stated the residential home builder vacancy is still open as none of the applications received to date are a fit for the requirements.
- 6) Public Comments: Mary Garcia shared with the Committee that she was able to secure a very good USDA loan and that she found a home in St. Augustine. Ms. Garcia said she expects to close in November.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:12 pm.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on October 16, 2019. Notices will be sent.