

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

**January 15, 2020
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 3:00 pm by Bill Lazar, Chair.

Members Present:

Jerry Folckemer
Tracy Hayes
Steve Ladrado
Bill Lazar
Alex Mansur

Members Absent:

Brittany Coronado
Jay Kalter
Harry Maxwell
Meaghan Perkins
Karl Vierck

Guests Present:

Lynn Rowland
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 not present. New AHAC member, Jerry Folckemer, was invited to share a bit about his background and he spoke about his company, Old City Homes, and the need he is trying to fill in the community by providing quality homes at reasonable prices. Mr. Folckemer said he built a small subdivision with 22 homes in Hastings priced at \$160,000 and he also built 35 homes in South St. Augustine and sold all of those at only a slightly higher price point. Mr. Folckemer said he hopes this will be his biggest year yet and he has plans to build 30 homes and sell them under \$175,000. Mr. Folckemer said he uses the same craftsmen to do all of his homes, including the larger, more expensive homes he has built on the ocean. Mr. Folckemer stated the quality is just as high on the less expensive homes as it is on the larger, higher priced homes. Mr. Folckemer said he hoped that by joining the AHAC, there might be a chance to work together to help even more of the lower income residents of St. Johns County. Tracy Hayes asked about rentals and Mr. Folckemer said they do not currently handle rentals but said he would not be averse to discussing that possibility. Mr. Hayes also asked how Old City Homes avoids selling to investors who are simply looking to profit and Mr. Folckemer said his focus is selling to families and he remains selective about who he is selling to and working with. Mr. Folckemer went on to say at least half of his homes have been sold to young veterans who have just gotten out of the service.

- 2) Approval of Minutes: Minutes were not approved – quorum not present.
- 3) New Members and Vacancy Update: Mary Garcia advised there is still one vacancy on the AHAC and it is for a Citizen of St. Johns County. Ms. Garcia said she would send all applications to members via email and recommendations can be made at the February meeting.
- 4) Triennial Report Review: In an effort to educate new members of AHAC about its purpose, Bill Lazar explained the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee was set up by State statute as part of the State's rule for how communities spend their SHIP dollars. Mr. Lazar explained SHIP, run by Florida Housing Finance Corporation, is the most flexible affordable housing program, as it gives communities some latitude in deciding how to use the money. Mr. Lazar explained the State also requires a citizen's group (the AHAC) to review the progress of how those funds are spent and to produce the Triennial Report, which identifies incentives that might help affordable housing within that community. Mr. Lazar explained this report is presented to the County Commissioners and upon their approval, it is sent to the State of Florida. Mr. Lazar said the last report was submitted in December, 2019. Mr. Lazar said the hope is that some of these ideas are put into play and some of the items the AHAC listed on their 2016 Triennial report did come to fruition and are being put into practice within the County. Bill Lazar said he hopes this report will be used as a tool for builders to take to the County's Growth Management Department to start a discussion.
- 5) Planning/Moving Forward: Bill Lazar stated impact fees remain a big issue and suggested a moratorium on fees for homes below a certain price point would be a boon for affordable housing. Mr. Lazar added the County might impose a soft, second mortgage to ensure homes aren't flipped and sold to investors. Mr. Lazar said he also hopes to work with the County to see if they would be willing to put in infrastructure in areas slated for affordable housing. Mr. Folckemer said the impact fees on each of his homes priced at \$160,000 were \$12,000. Discussion ensued regarding qualified buyers, income qualifying buyers and how to encourage more affordable building that is sold to those that need it, rather than investors.

Mr. Lazar asked that Joe Cone request staff from the County's Growth Management Department to come and speak to the AHAC regarding the incentives on the recent Triennial Report and how some of these suggestions might be put into place. Mr. Lazar also asked that Mr. Giammanco, from the Disaster Relief program, come in and address the AHAC. Mr. Lazar explained the County received approximately \$48 million of HUD money from Hurricane Matthew and half of those funds are designated to go toward housing repair and development and the other half to infrastructure and storm water improvements. Mr. Lazar went on to say an RFP was put out by the County last December, seeking developers with a plan to build on two multi-family property sites. Mr. Lazar said he would like Mr. Giammanco or another member of the Disaster Relief team to come and share their vision for those housing funds with the AHAC. Discussion ensued with regard to suggestions and possible collaborations with the County.

- 6) Public Comments: None.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:24pm.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on February 19, 2020. Notices will be sent.

