

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

**January 16, 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 3:03 pm by Bill Lazar, Chair.

Members Present:

Tracy Hayes
Jay Kalter
Steve Ladrido
Alex Mansur
Karl Vierck
Herbie Wiles
Jon Woodard

Members Absent:

Harry Maxwell

Guests Present:

Shawna Novak, Director, SJC Health & Human Services
Joseph Cone, SJC Housing & Community Services Manager
Mary Garcia, SJC Support Staff
Frank Williams
Chelsea Reppin

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) CoC – Affordable Housing Ad-Hoc Committee Update: Joseph Cone explained this committee continues to meet each month and Mr. Cameron is preparing another white paper to bring before the Board of County Commissioners (BCC). Mr. Cone said he is providing technical support by organizing and warehousing the data that is being collected. Mr. Cone said once the information is compiled, it will be reviewed by the CoC and ultimately be presented to the BCC. Mr. Lazar said he believes the work being done by the CoC and County staff will dovetail with AHAC's Recommendations and some discussion ensued.
- 3) Triennial Report Planning: Mr. Lazar referred members to the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee Strategy Manual and promised to send the link for access. Mr. Lazar explained AHAC is responsible for providing incentives and impediments to

affordable housing every three years, in the form of a report, which is sent to the State after approval by the County Commissioners. Mr. Lazar said the approximately \$1.3 million in SHIP funds that St. Johns County receives is dependent upon this report's submission. Mr. Cone provided copies of the 2016 Committee Recommendations to AHAC members. Mr. Cone explained these recommendations, in the form of the Triennial Report, must be completed and submitted to the State of Florida by the end of 2019. Mr. Cone did clarify these are just recommendations and they are designed to shine a light on affordable housing and open up discussion that it might ultimately lead to action. Bill Lazar said it is important for every member of AHAC to speak to the Commissioners and to concentrate on "low hanging fruit" or incentives that might be created without a great deal of time and expense on the County's part. Mr. Lazar said it is important for the Commission to hear from everyone and not just a particular few. Mr. Lazar said the CoC is hoping to get the Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Council more involved in the affordable housing conversation. Mr. Lazar said an Action Plan is needed for AHAC to proceed with preparing the Recommendations. Mr. Cone referred to the 2016 Committee Recommendations and said all of the items that are highlighted in yellow must be discussed. Mr. Cone asked if the Committee would like to take the report home and review before next month's AHAC meeting, in order to get a better understanding of what is involved. Steve Ladrado voiced the opinion that some of the Recommendations would never have a chance of being addressed under the current Board of County Commissioners. Mr. Ladrado asked Joe Cone and Bill Lazar to propose three or four items that they believe would be more likely to be addressed. Mr. Ladrado said this might create some momentum and let the community know that AHAC is a group interested in taking some action and getting things done. Mr. Lazar said he believes that a laundry list is necessary as some types of recommendations might speak to one Commissioner and not another. Mr. Lazar said impediments to affordable housing should also be considered and included in this list, though he did agree that the items that are more easily achievable might be concentrated on first. Mr. Cone clarified all incentives must be addressed but they could certainly be prioritized in their placement on the report. General discussion ensued with regard to incentives and the best way to present to the BCC in order to stimulate some action.

Joe Cone asked how the Committee would like to proceed in the review of the Committee Recommendations. Karl Vierck suggested two incentives be reviewed, per meeting, so that the entire report can be completed by October, 2019. Mr. Lazar requested all Committee members read the report prior to the February meeting and be ready to discuss. Shawna Novak said it would be helpful for the AHAC members to have a timeline showing them when each benchmark must be met. Joe Cone said he would prepare a timeline in preparation for the February AHAC meeting. Mr. Cone said he believes that with some review between now and the February meeting, the AHAC members might be able to sign off on three or four of the recommendations right away. Mr. Cone said he believes they are well-written and to the point. Mr. Cone reminded all present that regular AHAC meeting attendance will be vital over the next 9 or 10 months, if the timeline is to be adhered to and the report submitted on time.

- 4) Election of Officers and Discussion on Open Seats: Joe Cone explained the BCC has adopted a stricter interpretation of the descriptions of the seats required to make up the AHAC. Mr. Cone explained County Administration, with the direction of the Board, did not move forward with the recommendations made by the AHAC for the essential service personnel position and the citizen engaged in residential affordable home building because they did not believe the candidates had the background to properly fit the descriptions of the seats. Mr. Cone explained the vacancies will be posted again for at least two more weeks, and he asked that Committee members get the word out that the AHAC still has these vacancies. Mary Garcia said she would forward the seat descriptions to all AHAC members again, as well as the link to the County's application to join a board or committee. There was discussion about reaching out to some of the candidates who were not approved for the AHAC and Bill Lazar said he would like to reach out to Frank Valdes, City of St. Augustine Commissioner, and ask that he attend future AHAC meetings as a member of the public.

Bill Lazar opened the floor for nominations for officers. After brief discussion, **Motion** made by Alexander Mansur to nominate Bill Lazar to serve as Chair for another term; motion seconded by Jon Woodard. **Motion passed unanimously.** **Motion** made by Alexander Mansur to nominate Steven Ladrido to serve as Vice Chair; motion seconded by Bill Lazar. **Motion passed unanimously.**

- 5) Public Comments: Frank Williams said he was an affordable housing developer in California and he said one of the biggest assists he received as a non-profit, was from the Housing Authority. Mr. Williams said he sent a letter to Mayor Nancy Shaver and the County Commissioners outlining the benefits of a Housing Authority and offering the assistance of a consultant in order to start one. Mr. Williams believes the County is losing out on millions of dollars because they do not have a Housing Authority. Mr. Williams said Housing Authorities assist in gaining federal resources for local housing and leading and developing quality public/private partnerships. Mr. Williams was of the opinion that city and county government are not working together to support affordable housing and threatened he may file a federal lawsuit. He will provide the letter he sent to the City and the County, during "Public Comment" at the next AHAC meeting.

Bill Lazar said the County's "Restore St. Johns" program is working with people impacted by hurricane Matthew. Shawna Novak said there are \$22 million in federal funds earmarked for this program. Mr. Lazar said those applying for assistance must have already filed with FEMA for assistance in the wake of hurricane Matthew but these funds can assist with things like replacement windows that may not have been approved initially and even roof replacement for those who simply had roof repair done. Ms. Novak clarified it is important to encourage everyone to call and let the specialist determine eligibility. Mr. Cone said advocates for the program have been attending community meetings, knocking on doors and doing their very best to get word out about this program. Mr. Cone and Ms. Novak encouraged AHAC members to get word out and to communicate any information they might have with regard to those most in need to the contact person for

“Restore St. Johns”. Mr. Cone said he would provide that number and Ms. Novak said cards and flyers are available outside the Egret conference room that provide more information and the phone number to call to make appointments.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 pm.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on February 20, 2019