

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

**February 20, 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
Bill Lazar
Harry Maxwell
Herbie Wiles

Members Absent:

Alex Mansur
Karl Vierck
Jon Woodard

Guests Present:

Nancy Eisele, Lutheran Services
Shawna Novak, Director, SJC Health & Human Services
Mary Garcia, SJC 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 December, 2018 meeting; motion seconded by Tracy Hayes. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- 3) Triennial Report – Planning: Bill Lazar reviewed the purpose of the Triennial report and the timeline that must be adhered to in order to have the report ready to submit to the State by the end of the year. Mr. Lazar referred to the timeline and report planning grid Mr. Cone provided. There was some discussion about recent projects that have no affordable housing components. Mr. Lazar said it would be extremely helpful for the County Commission to strongly encourage developers to set aside some portion of their projects for affordable housing as developer were required to do some eight years ago. Mr. Lazar said, in his opinion, developers should not be allowed to opt out of setting aside some portion of their project for workforce housing. Mr. Kalter said large businesses that move into the area and create the

need for jobs should be made to subsidize affordable housing, rather than placing the onus on builders, since it is extremely difficult to do anything affordable, especially for smaller builders. Bill Lazar asked Shawna Novak how much DRI money there is and Ms. Novak said approximately \$1.6 million. Harry Maxwell asked if any of this money would be shifted to the HFA and Ms. Novak explained the money will remain in the Housing Trust Fund and it will be distributed via an RFP. Harry Maxwell explained his arrangement with Florida Housing and the fact that he must rent to those with low and very low income (30-60% of area median income). Mr. Maxwell said it is his belief that everyone should be responsible to subsidize affordable or workforce housing, to some degree, since the alternative is rising crime rates and an increasing number of homeless, which will affect the entire community. John Valdes, City of St. Augustine Commissioner, attended the meeting and discussion ensued with regard to the City's position on affordable housing. Mr. Valdes opined the City may be in a better position than the County to propel some of the incentives forward and he said he would welcome a workshop collaboration between the City and the County. Mr. Lazar said that very idea had been brought up at the last AHAC meeting and he hopes to make it happen. Mr. Valdes said he believes the current City Commission is receptive to the affordable housing movement. Discussion ensued with regard to the "Airbnb" issue and how to ensure properties remain affordable and protected from being turned into this type of rental property.

Ms. Novak explained the timeline Mr. Cone provided for Committee members and reviewed the timeline leading to the submission of the Triennial Report to the State. Mr. Lazar asked Committee members to review Mr. Cone's notes on the recommendations and incentives from the last Triennial Report. Mr. Lazar pointed out that Mr. Cone listed recommendations for affordable housing incentives in eleven areas outlined in the Florida Statutes. Mr. Lazar referred to Mr. Cone's comments in red and pointed out those that have been addressed since the last report and those that require further discussion. Discussion ensued with regard to the best process for preparing the report and suggestions were made. Mr. Hayes suggested it would be prudent to have some discussions with the Commissioners prior to submitting the report to see if they have questions or concerns regarding any of the incentives. Mr. Hayes said this would allow time to address these concerns and modify the incentives. Mr. Lazar said it is important for all AHAC members to speak to the commissioners and address matters they know best. Mr. Lazar said Mr. Hayes could, for example, discuss with commissioners the issues the bank might have hiring tellers since affordable housing is so difficult to find. Mr. Lazar said he is taking new Commissioner, Jeremiah Blocker, out into the community tomorrow and he hopes to find out what issues are important to him and what his feelings are concerning workforce housing. Mr. Valdes said he appreciated being invited to join in these AHAC meetings and he suggested that while he didn't believe impact fees could be waived altogether, the fees on infill lots might be reduced. Mr. Lazar said that is just the type of incentive that is more likely to gain traction.

Bill Lazar asked that Jay Kalter share the information from today's meeting with the Housing Finance Authority.

There was discussion regarding the next regularly scheduled AHAC meeting as it falls during Spring Break, on the 20th of March. Ms. Garcia will send an email inquiry to Committee members to see whether a March 13th meeting might be a better choice.

- 4) Discussion – Remaining Open Seats: Ms. Garcia said the two vacant seats were posted again on the County website and the two applications received while it was open did not fit either requirement. Ms. Novak said she would speak to John Eaton at Flagler Hospital to see if he has any recommendations for the “Essential Services Personnel” opening and Mr. Lazar said he would put word out at the next builders meeting for the “Residential Home Builder” seat. Ms. Garcia said the vacancy will be reposted, with a deadline of March 20th, 2019.
- 5) Public Comments: None.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:59 pm.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on either March 13 or March 20, 2019, depending upon Committee member responses regarding attendance. Notices will be sent once a date is set.