

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

**March 13, 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 3:02 pm by Bill Lazar, Chair.

Members Present:

Tracy Hayes
Steve Ladrido
Bill Lazar
Alex Mansur
Harry Maxwell
Herbie Wiles
Karl Vierck

Members Absent:

Jay Kalter
Jon Woodard

Guests Present:

Shawna Novak, Director, SJC Health & Human Services
Barbara Preston

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 Alex Mansur to approve minutes of January and February, 2019 meetings; motion seconded by Karl Vierck. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- 3) Review of Previous Triennial Report – Member Comments: The schedule for report preparation and submittal, provided by Joe Cone at the February meeting, was reviewed. Herbie Wiles asked why the Triennial Report references St. Augustine, as well as St. Johns County. Bill Lazar said this was an effort to be inclusive and he went on to say that he believes the current City of St. Augustine commissioners are very supportive of affordable housing. Mr. Lazar said he is aware City staff have applied for some of the disaster relief funds for infrastructure in West Augustine. Mr. Lazar said it would be helpful to bring some of the incentives from this year's Triennial Report to the attention of the City. Mr. Lazar said City and County Development staff need something concrete that can be pushed. Mr. Lazar mentioned the new apartment complex, The Landing, on San Sebastian View,

which, he said, did not include any affordable units. Mr. Lazar said there were no impact fees or density requirements on this project and it would have been helpful had they been required to make even as few as 5% of the units affordable. Mr. Lazar said he was also sorry to see the County had missed out on the opportunity to require the developer to set aside some of the new apartments being built on CR 207 for affordable housing. Mr. Lazar said the City of Miami is introducing an ordinance that requires any developer looking for waiver, zoning variance or density bonus to take some part in providing workforce housing. Mr. Lazar said incentives that get people's attention are necessary and, if they aren't willing to include workforce housing voluntarily, then perhaps linkage fees might be imposed. Mr. Lazar also referred to the housing trust fund and said developers could be given the option to donate money, rather than include affordable housing in their plan. Karl Vierck expressed some concern regarding the "not in my backyard" attitude of many residents and brought up Nocatee as an example. Mr. Vierck said there has been speculation that developers are trying to get out of their commitment to affordable housing there. Bill Lazar said a Community Land Trust might be the answer in a situation such as the one in Nocatee and explained it would be similar to what is being done with land trusts in California. Mr. Lazar explained individuals buy a home but do not purchase the land it sits on and explained that instead, the land would be owned by a non-profit, thus bringing down the cost of the home. Mr. Lazar said while this wouldn't bring the price of homes in St. Johns County down to \$100,000, it would certainly make buying a home here much more attainable for the workforce. Tracy Hayes suggested focusing on trying to bring an 80-100 unit rental property to the area, with a specific percentage tagged as affordable, and he suggested the 207 corridor as the site, for the sake of example. Mr. Lazar said they would need to find a willing developer and see what might be required as incentives to get a project like this done. Karl Vierck said a developer should know if they agree to put a certain percentage of affordable units into a project, then they would get "X" as incentive. Karl Vierck said the developer is only interested in his "price per door" and he said taking a percentage off of their up-front costs and amortizing fees over 30 years is what would get their attention. Mr. Vierck said he believes it is important to make this as close to a fixed equation as possible. Mr. Vierck opined the process should begin with rentals and that will eventually give way to homeownership. Bill Lazar asked that Mr. Vierck author this incentive for the Triennial Report and he agreed that he would.

For the purpose of the Triennial report, Mr. Lazar suggested breaking up into two groups; one for incentives for home ownership and one for rental units. Mr. Lazar said, for example, if a build were done in an area zoned for multi-family units, the ability to add 10% more units than what the area is zoned for might be offered, provided those additional units are for people with income under 60% of the area median income. Bill Lazar said these residents would have to be vetted, to ensure they are part of the County's workforce. Mr. Lazar said the "Home Matters Report" revealed that, of Florida home sales in 2017, priced under \$245,000, only 48% were ever homesteaded, which would indicate that 52% of these home sales were to investors for rent or to out-of-town, second home buyers. Steve Ladrado said he believes that D.R. Horton set aside several homes for affordable housing in their San Salito neighborhood. Mr. Ladrado said he was made aware of this by one of

D.R. Horton's sales agents who said the purchasers of these homes used FHA loans, were income-verified and they were also required to be primary occupancy owners. Mr. Lazar asked if Shawna Novak might find out something more about this and she said she would contact Suzanne Konchan in Growth Management.

Discussion ensued with regard to getting the Commissioners' attention and which incentives might be most enticing to developers. Bill Lazar said he has a meeting with both Commissioner Johns and Commissioner Dean in the next two weeks but he said they also need to hear from developers. Mr. Lazar said it would have a great impact if a builder would take the time to sit down with two or three of the County Commissioners and explain to them what, exactly, is holding them back from building something affordable in St. Johns County. Mr. Vierck said the expense and all of the red tape involved in the building process in St. Johns County is what is driving these builders to other counties.

- 4) "Home Matters 2019" report to the Florida Legislature: Mr. Lazar said he thought the report did a great job of including photos of affordable rentals as they show very well thought out complexes with amenities you might find in other, more expensive properties such as computer labs and workout facilities. Mr. Lazar thought this may lay to rest some worries the general public have about affordable rental properties.
- 5) Public Comments: None.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:59 pm.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on April 17, 2019. Notices will be sent once a date is set.