

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

February 17, 2021  
Minutes

The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee of St. Johns County met at 3:00 pm at the Health & Human Services Center, in the Kingfisher Conference room, at 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, Florida 32084.

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 pm by Bill Lazar, Chair.

Members Present:

Jay Braxton  
Brittany Coronado  
Tracy Hayes  
Steven Ladrado  
Bill Lazar  
Harry Maxwell  
Michael O'Donnell

Members Absent:

Commissioner Henry Dean  
Alex Mansur  
Meaghan Perkins  
Karl Vierck

Guests Present:

Saleena Randolph, Growth Management  
Joseph Cone, Assistant Director, Health & Human Services  
Roberto Ortiz, Housing & Community Development 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 introduced themselves and provided brief background. Quorum was present.
- 2) Approval of Minutes: **Motion** made by Harry Maxwell to approve minutes of January, 2021; motion seconded by Steven Ladrado. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- 3) Quick Update – San Marcos Heights & Victoria Crossing – Roberto Ortiz: Specifications on the projects were sent out prior to the meeting and a brief synopsis of both developments was provided in the meeting packet. Mr. Ortiz said the San Marcos Heights project is scheduled to close on February 26<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Ortiz stated the development will have 132 units and 100% of those units will be rented to individuals and families at 60% of the area median income. Mr. Ortiz said he would notify the AHAC and the Housing Finance Authority of the groundbreaking date, should they wish to attend. Mr. Ortiz went on to say the Victoria Crossing land contract will go before the Board of County Commissioners on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and he expects Turnstone Development will then submit their bond application to the St. Johns County Housing Finance Authority. Mr. Ortiz said this project will include 96 units, with fifteen of those units rented at 30% of the area median income, and 81 of the units rented at 60% of the area median income. Brittany Coronado asked if consideration had been given to collaborating with Care Connect, since they hold a collaborative list of low to moderate income individuals and families who are seeking housing and would qualify for these apartments. Mr. Ortiz said he would exchange contact information with Ms. Coronado after this meeting and he would see to it that both developers of these projects contact Ms. Coronado to discuss their plans for the tenant vetting process. Mr. Lazar stated these developers received CDBG-DR funds and asked Mr. Ortiz how much each project received. Mr. Ortiz said SHAG, developer of San Marcos Heights, and Turnstone, developer of Victoria Crossing, each received \$15 million and he also stated each developer was required to commit to 40 years of affordability, with oversight provided by St.

Johns County. Discussion ensued with regard to tax incentives and what incentives, other than cash, are available to developers to encourage them to build affordable housing. Mr. Lazar stated he has received several calls from builders about such incentives within the last few weeks.

- 4) AHAC Annual Report 2021: Mr. Lazar stated what was once a triennial report is now due every year and its purpose is to include incentives that would encourage affordable housing, for both rental and for homeownership. Mr. Lazar said the last report was submitted in 2019 and included more than twenty incentives. Mr. Lazar also stated most of the incentives have not been implemented and should remain on the 2021 report. As was discussed at the January meeting, Mr. Lazar suggested two or three of the most critical incentives should be chosen and primary focus placed on those items. Ms. Garcia provided Mr. Lazar with an email sent by Alex Mansur, who was unable to attend today's meeting, with the items he selected as high priorities. Mr. Lazar stated Mr. Mansur targeted flexible density requirements, accessory dwelling units, and flexible lot configurations as priorities. Mr. Lazar asked for other input and Mr. Ladrado stated that builder and former AHAC member, Jerry Folckemer, often lamented the lack of infrastructure surrounding affordable lots as an issue. Mr. Maxwell said impact fees are a big deterrent to affordable housing. Mr. Lazar asked what Mr. Cone's understanding is of reservation of infrastructure capacity. Mr. Cone stated when he worked as a planner in another Florida county, any development with more than 100 units, or that generated more than 100 trips per day, would have some sort of concurrency or mitigation requirement. Mr. Cone said the developer would be required to add another lane, or incorporate a turning feature, if more than 100 trips per day would be feasibly generated by the new development. Mr. Cone said a mitigation fee might be paid instead, and these funds were used for bus stops, sidewalks, benches, etc. Mr. Lazar said a huge obstacle to affordable housing is requiring the developer to put in infrastructure and spoke about two projects; one by St. Johns Housing Partnership (SJHP), which involved the County providing infrastructure if the developer bought the land. Mr. Lazar said Sadowski funds were used on the SJHP project but he wondered if CDBG funds might be used to cover infrastructure costs contingent upon land purchase at a later date, due to uncertainties regarding the Sadowski funds. Discussion ensued with regard to the County's affordable surplus lot inventory. Mr. Cone said properties are vacant and platted but many are in need of infrastructure. Mr. Lazar said he hoped a process would soon be worked out so that these lots can be sold and built upon. Mr. Lazar asked about an update on the accessory dwelling unit item that Joe Cearley with the County's Growth Management Department, was working on and Mr. Cone said though they have not had many affordable housing meetings recently due to Covid, he believes Mr. Cearley made good progress on the item and he said he would follow up. Mr. Cone said he will also ask Mr. Cearley about the affordable housing zone item that would capture rentals. Mr. Cone said it is his understanding that it would be somewhat broader than the affordable housing zoning created not long ago for home ownership.

Discussion turned back to the annual incentives report and Brittany Coronado suggested sending a query to AHAC members asking them to rank incentives from the 2019 report in order of priority. Bill Lazar and Steve Ladrado agreed to work with Brittany Coronado in order to come up with such a tool and then ask County staff to implement. Mr. Lazar asked if Mr. Cone would provide him with a copy of the CDBG survey for reference and Mr. Cone said he would email it to him. Mr. Cone stated the annual incentive report does include 11 or 12 items that must be addressed each year but based on results of the survey sent to AHAC members, 3 or 4 items could be focused on and then highlighted in the presentation given to the Board of County Commissioners in December. Mr. Cone also said guest speakers could be called in to present at monthly AHAC meetings about the priority items that are chosen by the Committee.

Mr. Ladrado suggested it would be helpful to keep track of affordable housing projects in the community. Mr. Ladrado made the point that these projects could be referenced when presenting this year's AHAC report to the Commissioners, with notes that explain what types of affordable housing incentives made them possible. Mr. Cone said there is a list that begins with projects in 2016 but he said that it must be updated with projects completed last year. Mr. Cone said he would ask staff to bring that list of projects up to date. Mr. Cone also stated the Social Services staff keeps a list of all affordable rentals in the community and they update and circulate that list weekly for clients and community partners.

- 5) Public Comment: None

The meeting was adjourned at 4:04 p.m.