

**Housing Finance Authority of  
St. Johns County, Florida  
Regular Meeting**

**March 25, 2021  
Minutes**

The Housing Finance Authority of St. Johns County met at 3:00 pm in the Kingfisher conference room in the Health & Human Services Building – 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, Florida 32084.

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m. by Michael O'Donnell, Chair.

**Members Present:**

Linda DeGrande  
Robert Marshall  
Malinda Peebles  
Michael O'Donnell  
Erick Saks

**Members Absent:**

Andrew Evener  
Craig Higgins

**BCC Liaison:** Commissioner Jeb S. Smith

**Guests Present:**

B.J. Kalaidi – County Resident  
Marianne Edmonds, PRAG (via Zoom)  
Michael Hartman – Turnstone Development (via Zoom)  
Rich Komando, Esq. – Bradley, Garrison & Komando  
W. Henry O'Connell, CPA – W.H. O'Connell & Associates, P.A.  
Bill Freeman – Engineer, CDBG-DR Department (via Zoom)  
Sarah Butler – Assistant to Deputy County Administrator  
Joseph Cone – Assistant Director, Health & Human Services  
Julie Voorhees – Housing Support Staff  
Mary Garcia – Social Services Support Staff

Notices regarding the meeting were sent to all members. No press was in attendance.

**Additions/Deletions to Agenda and Approval of Agenda:**

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda. **Motion** made by Linda DeGrande to accept the agenda as presented; motion seconded by Robert Marshall. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**Public Comment:** None.

**Financial Report/Review of Bills and Correspondence:**

- **February, 2021:** Henry O'Connell reported the February income statements and balance sheets were provided in members' meeting packets. Mr. O'Connell said he met with a CPA from James Moore and Company, and had a preliminary discussion with regard to the 2020 County audit, which includes the HFA. Mr. O'Connell said he will most likely need Chair Michael O'Donnell's signature in mid-May for documents related to the audit. Mr. O'Connell stated a transfer of \$2,229.17 was made from the SBA account to Ameris Bank, and the SBA account was then closed. Mr. O'Connell said there is a deposit pending from Raymond James and once he confirms that deposit has been made to Ameris Bank, and not the Bank of America, he will

contact Linda DeGrande to assist with closing the HFA's Bank of America account. Mr. O'Donnell asked if the Ameris Bank account is earning any interest and Mr. O'Connell said it is not but he will inquire about the HFA's account options based on minimum daily balance and number of transactions. Mr. O'Donnell asked about rules with regard to the HFA investing money earned from the recent bond issuance, while determining what their next project might be, and Ms. Edmonds said she would look into this to see if there is an investment policy for the HFA. Ms. Edmonds said if there is no such policy, then the state statute would apply and the HFA could invest their money in CDs and U.S. securities, for example. Ms. Edmonds said she would look into the investment options available to the HFA and report on those at the next meeting.

Mr. O'Connell inquired about the recent closing of the San Marcos Heights project and said he had not been notified of a wire transfer by the bank. Marianne Edmonds was able to confirm that the deposit had been made into the HFA's Ameris Bank account on the date of close, March 5th. Mr. O'Connell said he would confirm this deposit with the bank when he returned to his office.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion** made by Robert Marshall to accept February meeting minutes; motion seconded by Erick Saks.  
**Motion passed unanimously.**

### **New Business:**

- **New Member Welcome:** Joe Cone introduced new member Erick Saks and explained that the Board of County Commissioners approved the HFA's recommendation of Mr. Saks and of Mr. Andrew Evener at their February 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mr. Cone said Mr. Evener was unable to attend today's meeting due to illness but was very happy to be joining the HFA. Mr. Saks shared some of his history and background in the Air Force, and he said he was happy to return to St. Augustine. Mr. Saks said he looked forward to being a member of the HFA and assisting in their mission to provide affordable housing to St. Johns County.
- **Victoria Crossing – Michael Hartman, Development Manager, Turnstone Development:** Mr. Hartman explained Turnstone Development is a not-for-profit developer that has been in business since 1988 and has been building homes and apartments in the state of Florida since 2011. Mr. Hartman said Turnstone's Florida projects have included fixing up foreclosed homes in Miami-Dade County and selling them at affordable prices, construction of a 105 unit high-rise, all affordable, in Ft. Lauderdale, and a 72 unit homeless development in Lakeland, Florida, which is not yet completed. Mr. Hartman said Turnstone has also submitted an application to develop an 84 unit project in Daytona Beach to house the homeless.

Mr. Hartman said the original site chosen for Victoria Crossing did not have wastewater capacity and has since been moved to 1850 SR-207, which is on the south side of that corridor, approximately one mile east of I-95. Mr. Hartman said the project will sit on 13.5 acres, 4 of which are wetlands, and will include 24 one bedroom units, 42 two bedroom units, and 30 three bedroom units, with 15 units at 30% of the area median income (AMI) and 81 units at 60% AMI. Mr. Hartman also said they plan to set aside 10% of the units for homeless veterans. Mr. Hartman went on to say all of the units will include Energy Star appliances and fans, and the entire project will be constructed following specifications of the Florida Green Building code. Mr. Hartman said the site will include a pull-off lane for school buses and for the Sunshine Bus, as well as a security gate, a playground, and an oversized clubhouse, which can also be used as a temporary emergency shelter. Mr. Hartman said that in order to serve as a shelter, the clubhouse will be equipped with showers, a kitchen, a large storage area, and a generator. Mr. Hartman said the bond application was submitted earlier this week to the St. Johns County HFA by way of the County's Housing Department and Mr. Cone said he would be watching for it to arrive. Erick Saks asked who would be monitoring income levels and ensuring residents were qualified to rent units and Marianne Edmonds stated there will be a compliance monitor in charge of reviewing rent roll reports provided by the developer and those reports will be monitored annually for compliance with the set asides. Mr. Hartman stated they have hired a company with 40 years'

experience with managing affordable housing and which currently manages more than 19,000 affordable units. Mr. Hartman said they will handle income compliance and all day to day management of Victoria Crossing. Mr. Cone added that CDBG funds, which are being used to partially fund this project, are federally monitored by HUD and DEO, as well. Mr. Hartman was also asked about advertising these units and he stated open houses will be held, ads will be placed in local publications, and flyers posted in nearby businesses. Mr. Hartman stated Turnstone's last development was 100% leased by the time they received their certificate of occupancy. There was discussion regarding the great need for affordable or workforce housing in St. Johns County and Mr. Hartman said there are currently 932 affordable units in the County that area monitored by Florida Housing Finance Corporation and as of the most recent reporting, 903 of those units are occupied. Linda DeGrande said she was checking on affordable rentals in the County recently and she stated all had waiting lists. Mr. Saks asked if the construction would be done by locals and Mr. Hartman said that Turnstone does not have its own construction company so they will be hiring a 3<sup>rd</sup> party general contractor to hire and manage local tradesmen and laborers.

**Administrator's Report:** Mr. Cone gave report as Mr. Ortiz was out of the office. Mr. Cone said Susan Leigh has asked for an additional month to prepare her report for the HFA and she plans to present it to them at their April meeting. Mr. Cone also stated there will be a workforce zoning item before the Board of County Commissioners at their April 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mr. Cone said this relates to the comprehensive plan and new zoning designation he worked on with Joe Cearley of the County's Growth Management Department approximately three years ago. Mr. Cone explained the new zoning allows for a reduction in development criteria in an effort to increase density to encourage affordable housing. Mr. Cone said Commissioner Dean has asked that the home price limit be raised from \$210,000 to \$240,000, and a short presentation will be given to the Commissioners at the April 6<sup>th</sup> County Commission meeting.

**Old Business:**

- **San Marco Heights Project Closing and Groundbreaking:** Mr. Cone said the project closed on March 5<sup>th</sup> and they are awaiting a groundbreaking date. Ms. DeGrande asked if HFA members can be present at the site on the day of groundbreaking and Mr. Cone said they are welcome to attend and he said he would let them know when the developer has provided a date.
- **HFA Lots Update:** Mr. Cone stated the extension agreement was signed with the new closing date of July 6, 2021 and the buyer is performing their due diligence at this time.
- **Own a Home Opportunity Program Update:** Ms. Cone reported there were two loan reservations made by Academy Mortgage within the last month.

**Meeting was adjourned** at 3:46 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the HFA will be held on April 22, 2021, in the Kingfisher conference room, in the Health & Human Services Center, at 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine.

Respectfully submitted,

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Secretary