

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

April 20, 2022
Minutes

The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) 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 3:10 pm by Vice-Chair, Bill Lazar

Members Present:

Greg Burke - Citizen engaged in residential home building industry
Jay Braxton - St. Johns County Resident
Michael O'Donnell - HFA Chair/ Citizen actively engaged as an advocate for low-income persons
Bill Lazar - Citizen actively engaged as a not-for-profit provider of affordable housing
Alex Mansur - Citizen actively engaged in areas of labor in home building
Harry Maxwell - Citizen actively engaged as a for-profit provider of affordable housing
Dr. William McCormick - Citizen actively serving on Local Planning Agency

Members Absent:

Sarah Arnold - Locally elected official
Steven Ladrado - Citizen representing employers within St. Johns County
Tracy Hayes - Citizen engaged in banking or mortgage banking industry
Karl Vierck - Citizen actively engaged as a Real Estate Professional
One vacancy - Essential Services Personnel (recommendation has been submitted to BCC)

Guests Present:

Sarah Taylor, Assistant County Administrator
Roberto Ortiz, Housing and Community Development Manager
Michelle Lawlor, Housing & Community Development Support Staff
Mary Garcia, Social Services Support Staff
Teresa Bishop, Growth Management, Planning Division Manager
Frank Williams, Resident
Lindsey Rodea, Community Impact Coordinator, Flagler Health +
Carolina Morrow, Habitat for Humanity, St Johns County
Shannon Nazworth, President and CEO of Ability Housing

Notices regarding the meeting were sent to all members. No press attended.

- 1) Introduction of AHAC Members and SJC Staff: Committee members and County staff were acknowledged and quorum was present.
- 2) Approval of Minutes: **Motion** made by Harry Maxwell to approve minutes of March, 2022 meeting; motion seconded by Alex Mansur. **Motion passed unanimously.**

- 3) Administrators Report: Roberto Ortiz gave a PowerPoint presentation detailing progress at two affordable developments located on SR207, San Marcos Heights and Victoria Crossing. Mr. Ortiz reported that San Marcos Heights will be moving residents into the first finished building during the month of June and the next building is expected to be complete and ready for move-in by August, 2022. Mr. Ortiz went on to say construction of the Victoria Crossing project is on schedule and progressing as planned.
- 4) AHAC Annual Report 2022 Review: Roberto Ortiz introduced Teresa Bishop, Planning Division Manager for St. Johns County Growth Management Department. Ms. Bishop shared a PowerPoint, detailing the County's profile, land use and zoning, and efforts the County is making toward establishing more affordable housing. Discussion ensued regarding the tremendous growth rate in St Johns County, which Ms. Bishop stated has been 3-4% each year, for the last ten years. Ms. Bishop stated a typical growth rate is approximately 2% each year and excessive growth like what St. Johns is experiencing is a challenge for any county government. Mike O'Donnell asked if there is any way to curb the growth rate based on a policy perspective and Ms. Bishop stated that there are growth boundaries that could be set in place but there must be a political will behind such an action. Ms. Bishop went on to discuss the Comprehensive Plan that Growth Management uses and she explained that St. Johns County can have more than what is required by the state in the Plan but must at least meet base guidelines. Ms. Bishop stated the County's Comprehensive Plan consists of nine elements required by statute. As the conversation continued, a lengthy discussion focused on topics such as affordable housing, density, and Developments of Regional Impacts (DRI's). Ms. Bishop stated that in 2020, the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) passed a Workforce Housing Zoning District and four workforce housing developments have since been approved to use that zoning but none of them have been built yet. Ms. Bishop spoke about an affordable housing study, which is a requirement. The study is done by private consultants, hired by the County. The study is completed approximately every 10 years. General discussion ensued regarding AHAC's strategy to continue to encourage affordable housing in St. Johns County. Bill Lazar stated the AHAC will be submitting a letter to the BCC regarding allocation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and he encouraged member attendance at an upcoming Growth Management workshop. Mr. Lazar also stated he would like to encourage the County to begin updating the Comprehensive Plan, and to hire a consultant to perform the affordable housing study.
- 5) Current Vacancies and Recommendations: **Motion** to recommend Alex Mansur to serve another term was made by Harry Maxwell; motion seconded by William McCormick. No other nominations were made. **Motion passed unanimously.** Ms. Garcia stated she anticipates Mr. Mansur's recommendation and Lindsey Rodea's recommendation (made at the February, 2022, meeting) will go before the BCC on May 17th.
- 6) St. Johns County American Rescue Plan Act Funding Appropriation (ARPA)/Phase II: The AHAC drafted a letter to be submitted to the BCC regarding the prioritizing of funding of various affordable housing projects. The letter was sent around for signatures by all members in attendance and it will be sent to the BCC.

Mary Garcia informed the AHAC that Commissioner Sarah Arnold will be taking over the position of "locally elected official" on the AHAC from Commissioner Henry Dean. Ms. Garcia stated Ms. Arnold was only just notified and she had a scheduling conflict, making her unavailable to attend today's meeting. Ms. Garcia went on to say that Commissioner Arnold

will also act as liaison to the Housing Finance Authority and the Health & Human Services Advisory Council, which both fall under the Health & Human Services Department.

- 7) Public Comment: Frank Williams stated that he has arranged for a guest speaker to present at the proposed public housing authority workshop on May 18th. Mary Garcia stated she will confirm that the date and time is agreeable to the Housing Finance Authority (HFA), as the AHAC has requested their attendance, making this a joint workshop. Ms. Garcia stated further details will be sent out to AHAC and HFA members once confirmed. Shannon Nazworth informed the Committee that she will be seeking final approval from Florida Housing, on April 29th, on Ability Housing's West Augustine project.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:12p.m.