

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

February 19, 2025
Minutes

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

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

Members Present - AHAC:

Polly Crabtree – Citizen rep/essential service personnel
Orville Dothage – Banking/mortgage banking industry
Drew Geisel – St. Johns County resident
Karl Vierck – Citizen actively engaged as a real estate developer
Bill Lazar – Citizen actively engaged as a not-for-profit provider of affordable housing
Harry Maxwell – Citizen actively engaged as a for-profit provider of affordable housing
Michael O’Donnell -HFA Chair/citizen actively engaged advocate for low-income persons
Judy Spiegel – Citizen actively serving on local planning agency
Ann Taylor - Commissioner

Members Absent - AHAC:

Greg Burke - Residential home builder
Alex Mansur – Citizen actively engaged in areas of labor in home building

Guests Present:

Jenny Harvey - Manager, Housing and Community Development
Carol Holtz – St Johns County Resident
Charlie Hunt – St. Johns County Resident
Laura Lavelle– Support Staff, St. Johns County Housing

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

1. **Introduction of AHAC Members and SJC Staff:** Introduction of AHAC Members and SJC Staff: Committee members and County staff were acknowledged, and a quorum was present.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** A **motion** was made by Karl Vierck to approve minutes of the January meeting; motion was seconded by Orville Dothage. **The motion passed unanimously.**

3. **Administrators Report:** Jenny Harvey reported that the department has selected a candidate for the Housing Inspector position and is waiting for acknowledgement from Human Resources that the candidate accepted the position. As soon as Ms. Harvey receives confirmation of the hire date and will let the committee know. Ms. Harvey stated that presently we are completing a requisition to back fill Sharon Whitcraft's position as HUD Certified Housing Counselor, she will be departing and moving on to something else. Her last day with us is February 22, 2025, Ms. Whitcraft will be teaching our Home Buyers Education Class on that day. We have another Certified Housing Counselor in the department and will be looking at a seamless transition and continuation of services. The Down Payment Assistance Program has had five closings to date, and we are looking at another five more by the end of next week, it seems we have momentum, and our bumps have smoothed out with each closure. Ms. Harvey stated she shared with her team that one of our new homeowners emailed a heartfelt thank you message of gratitude and a photo of the family in their new home. They are teachers and now live across the street from the school they teach in, so these are exactly our reasons for our "Why" and the "why" is coming into play with holding up this initiative of SHIP dollars. She also reported that we are working towards Impact fees strategy and pending for approval and we have some subsequent meetings with key members that will impact in the near future. We also have our Community Development Block Grant posting our Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) posting soon and we anticipate accepting applications in the spring. Jenny concluded her report and with that, Michael O'Donnell had posed a question regarding last month's public comment from Dog & Bog and asked if we have a status of what happened with the commissioners on that? Ms. Ann Taylor, Commissioner, commented that Dog & Bog came before the BCC yesterday and the Commissioners went ahead and asked if he could come back with a little more information, and the meeting will be in April. Mr. O'Donnell stated that we had some individuals from the public comment at the last meeting and disagree with Dog & Bog that they are not building affordable housing. Mr. O'Donnell expressed "I wondered what had happened with that since it is up for debate".
4. **2024 Board & Committees Annual Report – Committee review:** Ms. Harvey reported that the staff generated Boards & Committees Annual Report is due April 1st to the Board County Commissioners (BCC), she asked the members if there was any comments, recommendations, or suggestions, to make on the report. Ms. Harvey stated the Housing & Community Development Department will submit the report to the BCC. A **motion** was made by Karl Vierck to approve and recommend the 2024 Board & Committees Annual Report; motion was seconded by Harry Maxwell. **The motion passed unanimously.**
5. **Vacancy Recommendations:** All committee members were in favor of the re-appointment of Polly Crabtree and Gregory Burke. The third vacancy due to AHAC member Karl Vierck, citizen actively engaged as a real estate developer, submitted a letter of resignation from the committee effective today, February 19, 2025. Judy Spiegel recommended Tracie Sax as the newest member of the AHAC, Harry Maxwell 2nd the recommendation and all committee members were in favor of the recommendation for Tracie Sax appointment. Bill Lazar signed a letter to acknowledge the AHAC members' recommendation and to recommend to the BCC to appoint Tracie Sax. These recommendations will be presented in front of the Board of County

Commissioners (BCC) on March 18, 2025.

6. **Impact Fee Options:** Bill Lazar informed members that Alex Mansur and several of the AHAC members want to focus on one or two topics as a committee this year, one was Impact Fees and how they are utilized or priced out and the other was Density Bonuses. Mr. Lazar asked the members if we want to have any discussions on either one of those two topics. Mr. Dothage stated that we have already done a lot of work, and we have several options for the BCC to choose all or a couple of from the 2024 annual report, he stated we do not need to discuss Impact Fees any further. Mr. Dothage stated we can focus on one or all three recommendations from the 2024 annual report and bring it to the BCC. Mr. Lazar stated that we should go over in detail the section of the report that lists all three options we want and to be focused and clear when presenting to the commissioners. He further stated, we should refine the discussions before we bring it back to the BCC. Ms. Ann Taylor requested a copy of the 2024 Annual Report with the section highlighted that is being discussed today. Further discussion ensued between members about Impact Fees and Density Bonuses and taking the initiative to a BCC meeting agenda and to move forward in the next few months. Mr. Lazar asked the members to review the section listing Impact Fees modification of Impact Fees section of the 2024 Annual Report and bring their thoughts and refining that the message is clear for the BCC. Mr. Lazar asked the members to select one of the three recommendations and prepare to discuss at the next meeting in March. Ms. Harvey shared with the members that Housing & Community Development met with ADP Urban Planning & Management last month, and a draft copy of the Housing Need Assessment and Market Study/Plan will be provided for the AHAC and HFA steering committee. Mr. Dothage stated the timing is good of the Chamber's Comp Plan that will be finalized in a week that identifies shortages and tax dollars we are not collecting because of not having residents that live and work here in St Johns County. Mr. Dothage, AHAC member and is also the Chair of the Chamber, will meet with BCC Commissioners one on one and then with Representative Kim Kendall and then it can be distributed to others, the time frame for the meetings should be accomplished by the next AHAC meeting.
7. **2025 Annual Report Review & Affordable Housing Initiatives:** Mr. Lazar stated that we have all of the information for this topic as it is written in the 2024 Annual Report and focus on the two priorities, that we have all the information, and we are going to focus on the two incentives; Density Bonus and Impact Fees.
8. **Public Comment:** Discussion with Judy Spiegel and members regarding comp plan, change the language around for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's), it is an individual independent single family home option and not a developer option. Seniors would benefit from ADU's, increasing density and affordable housing unit for a senior. Ms. Spiegel stated, thinking creatively as people are not happy with additional development that is the kind of attitude here in St Johns County. Mr. Vierck expressed the need for more affordable housing in the areas it needs to be in, stating; we don't have the public transportation, creating affordable housing thirty miles out of the city. It does not solve the problems and not focusing on just single-family homes there is a huge disconnect because we need affordable housing rentals. Members discussed Live Local, longer deed restrictions, density development, infrastructure, tax credit programs. Charlie Hunt asked the committee about commercial Impact Fees, funding and schedule, Mr. Lazar explained

about Silver Leaf, World Golf Village and other commercial projects and fees and schedules. Carol Holtz is glad the committee is continuing to look at options, expressed concerns about property insurance and taxes going up.

The meeting adjourned at 4:01 p.m.