



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**Approved**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE**  
**100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE**  
**CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS**  
**8<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM**  
**MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2020 – 9:00 A.M.**

**Cumulative**

June 2019-May 2020

<b>Board Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Brandon Stewart, Chair (arr. 9:07)	P	7	0
Frances Epstein, Vice Chair	P	7	0
Phallon Bullard	P	5	2
Uwe Cerron (arr. 9:14)	P	1	0
Peter Cooper	P	7	0
Nancy Daly	P	6	1
Irv Minney	P	7	0
Donnalee Minott	P	6	1
Margi Nothard (by phone)	P	5	2
Edwin Parke	P	5	2
Mitchell Rosenstein	P	7	0

**Staff / Guests**

Avis Wilkinson, Housing Programs Administrator/Staff Liaison  
Joe Pasquariello, Assistant Building Official  
Lisa Tayar, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

**Communication to the City Commission**

None.

**I. ROLL CALL / DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

Vice Chair Epstein called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

**Motion** made by Mr. Rosenstein, seconded by Mr. Cooper, to let [Ms. Nothard] call in by phone. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 3, 2020**

**Motion** made by Mr. Cooper, seconded by Ms. Daly, to approve the minutes. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

**III. OLD BUSINESS**

- **Affordable Housing Trust Fund Balance Update**

Ms. Wilkinson reported that the Affordable Housing Trust Fund balance is currently \$173,768.16. This balance will be reduced further when funds for the Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) are removed.

- **CHDO RFP Update**

Fort Lauderdale Community Development Corporation (FLCDC) is still going through the permitting process for their planned improvements.

#### **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

Chair Stewart arrived at 9:07 a.m.

- **Speaker from Building Services – Joe Pasquariello – Assistant Building Official – Building Services**

Joe Pasquariello, Assistant Building Official with the City of Fort Lauderdale, briefly reviewed the City's permitting process, which involves providing an application to representatives of various City disciplines. If issues are identified during this process, the City contacts the applicant for more documentation or information. The City employs business assistance coordinators to whom applicants can reach out for additional information on any issues that may arise during permitting.

Florida Statutes require the City to review a set of submitted plans within 30 days. If the plans are missing necessary documentation, this could delay the process until the City receives all the information they need. Representatives of applicants do not always respond to requests for documentation in a timely manner, which may result in permitting delays.

Mr. Cooper suggested that residents could be provided with a step-by-step checklist for the application process so they are aware of what is required. Mr. Pasquariello replied that City Staff has created checklists to make the process easier; however, there are many different scenarios for submission, which can make it difficult to cover every necessity. He pointed out that City Staff has intermediaries who can help explain the process to applicants. Applicants are also encouraged to reach out to City Staff for information about delays or permit issues.

Ms. Bullard asked if applicants are allowed to submit incomplete applications. Mr. Pasquariello replied that they may do so, as some applicants wish to demonstrate that they are working through the permitting process. He agreed that this can contribute to the larger problem of permitting in a timely manner.

Mr. Rosenstein asked for more information on expedited permitting for affordable housing, asking if any disciplines are exempt from the expedited process. Mr. Pasquariello stated that there are no such exemptions. He emphasized that the City treats every project the same, and it is each department's responsibility to review an application. Expedited projects such as affordable housing are color-coded to designate that they receive higher priority. The workload for each project is different.

Mr. Cerron arrived at 9:14 a.m.

Mr. Rosenstein commented that he had understood deed-restricted affordable housing to be expedited for quicker review by each discipline. Mr. Pasquariello explained that the City has an in-house monitor who oversees the progress of expedited applications; however, because this individual may be responsible for a number of expedited applications at the same time, applicants are also encouraged to monitor and follow up on the progress of their applications.

Vice Chair Epstein asked what percentage of new or rehabilitated projects are designated for affordable housing. Mr. Pasquariello estimated that these projects constitute less than 3% of submissions. He could not speak to the availability of lots on which affordable housing could be constructed, as this is the purview of the Planning Department. He also noted that while micro-units are outside his discipline, there has been emerging demand for them in the past few years.

Chair Stewart asked if Mr. Pasquariello was aware of any forthcoming new programs or procedures from the City Manager's Office or other City Departments in relation to affordable housing. Mr. Pasquariello replied that the City Commission is eager to see the construction of more affordable housing, as they recognize it is a need. Developers, however, are typically more interested in maximizing the profits from housing construction.

Mr. Pasquariello moved on to permit fees, stating that both the fee schedule and a fee calculator are available online. The calculator determines the cost of permitting for a given project once its job costs have been entered. There may also be County impact fees, which are determined by the amount of additional need a project may create on different types of infrastructure, such as traffic or sewer/water usage. These percentage-based fees are used later on to upgrade those systems based upon need.

Ms. Wilkinson asked how Fort Lauderdale's fees compare to those of other cities. Mr. Pasquariello characterized the City's fees as somewhat higher than other nearby municipalities. He added that there is currently no mechanism by which fees are reduced for affordable housing development.

Mr. Parke asked how the City ensures that its infrastructure can accommodate new projects. Mr. Pasquariello replied that projects are reviewed by the Planning Department, which reviews all aspects of an application, including traffic flow,

water/sewer use, landscaping, and other requirements. If infrastructure for water and sewer use, for example, is insufficient or not in condition to serve the project, that applicant is required to upgrade the pipes.

Mr. Pasquariello advised that the Building Department has implemented a new computer program that is expected to integrate electronic plan review into the process. This means a designer or architect can submit plans electronically, and the plans may be reviewed simultaneously by multiple disciplines.

#### **V. AGENDA TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING**

The following Items were taken out of order on the Agenda.

- **AHAC 2020 Workplan**
- **Review of AHAC 2018 Affordable Housing Incentive Recommendations**

Vice Chair Epstein asked if the Committee is the only City organization that focuses on affordable housing needs. She proposed that the Committee reach out to and partner with similar agencies for a brainstorming session. Ms. Wilkinson recommended that the Committee first communicate its own proposals to the City Commission. Another option could be meeting with the Urban Planning and Design Department. She has requested the City Commission consider seating a representative of that Department or another individual with experience in planning on the Committee.

Ms. Wilkinson continued that the Committee's proposal(s) first need to be clarified for presentation to other entities or advisory bodies. After presentation and discussion, the proposals can then be amended and updated as needed. She emphasized that the Mayor and City Commissioners are in favor of affordable housing and are willing to listen to what the Committee can bring forward.

Chair Stewart observed that one of the Committee's next priorities is to review the 2018 Affordable Housing Incentive Recommendations and bring the most practical items back to the City Commission for adoption and implementation. Ms. Wilkinson stated that she would send the members an email advising them of the status of outreach to Urban Planning and Design, including whether or not a presentation may be possible at a future meeting.

Vice Chair Epstein recalled that in the past, the Committee spent significant time identifying City-owned lots and determining whether or not they were viable for residential use. They have also addressed the need to encourage more affordable housing development. She felt they could have an impact through raising these issues to other City organizations and determining if they can assist with other plans.

The members discussed the need to identify a dedicated funding source for affordable housing, with Mr. Cooper suggesting that a new millage rate could be one possible solution in lieu of further bond issues. Ms. Wilkinson noted that the Committee would need to consider funding sources outside federal and state grant funds, which do not provide sufficient money. The Affordable Housing Trust Fund is susceptible to being used up on a single project.

Mr. Parke raised the issue of impact fees. Ms. Bullard stated that some projects are developed in inexpensive ways to avoid fees imposed by the City or County. She recommended the possibility of reaching out to developers before they have broken ground on projects and convincing them to commit to a number of affordable units. Mr. Rosenstein recalled that while there has been discussion of inclusionary zoning in the past, a bill passed at the state level limited municipalities' abilities to mandate this zoning.

Mr. Cooper noted that another method of funding affordable housing, the State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) funds, has not been successful because the funds are so often swept for other uses. He noted that there are several Broward County groups interested in affordable housing, and suggested that these groups could visit the State Legislature together to advocate for funds. Ms. Daly noted that many developers prefer to pay a fee instead of setting aside a number of units for affordable housing, and proposed that the Committee recommend this no longer be offered as an option.

Chair Stewart encouraged the Committee members to review the 2018 Affordable Housing Incentive Recommendations prior to the next meeting.

#### **VI. GOOD OF THE ORDER**

None.

#### **VII. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING DATE – April 6, 2020**

#### **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 10:03 a.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.