



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

Approved
MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
VIRTUAL MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2021 – 9:00 A.M.

Cumulative

June 2020-May 2021

Committee Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Brandon Stewart, Chair	P	8	0
Frances Epstein, Vice Chair	P	7	1
Phallon Bullard	P	5	3
Uwe Cerron	P	8	0
Nancy Daly	A	6	2
Donnalee Minott	P	6	2
Margi Nothard	P	7	1
Edwin Parke	P	6	2
Ryan Wipplinger	P	4	0
Mayor Dean Trantalis/ Scott Wyman, Alternate	P	5	0

Staff / Guests

Avis Wilkinson, Housing Programs Administrator/Staff Liaison
Lashanda Elliott, Administrative Assistant
Rachel Williams, Housing and Community Development Manager
Daphnee Sainvil, Government and External Affairs Manager
Jamie Opperlee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communication to the City Commission

None.

I. ROLL CALL / DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Chair Stewart called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. It was noted that a quorum was present at the meeting.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 8, 2021

Motion made by Ms. Nothard, seconded by Mr. Wipplinger, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- **Affordable Housing Trust Fund Balance update – Avis Wilkinson**

Ms. Wilkinson reported that the Affordable Housing Trust Fund remains at \$807,831.73, which has not changed from the previous month.

- **City Monitoring / Compliance of Affordable Housing Developers – Avis Wilkinson**

Chair Stewart recalled that this issue was raised at the February 8, 2021 meeting. Ms. Wilkinson advised that she contacted Urban Design and Planning Manager Ella Parker, who clarified that the City has no monitoring or compliance program at this time. Regional Activity Center (RAC) projects enter into an inter-local agreement with Broward County for monitoring and enforcement of uses and entitlements, including preparations of annual affordable housing income data. Forthcoming policy direction from the City Commission is expected to establish a way to collect and monitor this data if a new affordable housing program is adopted.

Chair Stewart asked if the Committee should be prepared to offer input on this process. Ms. Wilkinson replied that when the policies and procedures are written, she will provide the members with a copy for review to determine if they have any input at that time. There is no timeline thus far for the development of the process.

Ms. Nothard requested clarification that the monitoring process would apply only to the Downtown RAC. Ms. Wilkinson explained that it will apply to both the Uptown and Downtown areas.

Mayor Trantalis reported that he had recently attended a class discussing the tools available to the City to establish affordable housing opportunities. The City is already undertaking all of the steps covered by this class. The missing element, however, is more funding for this purpose.

Fort Lauderdale has a policy for the sale of its surplus real estate: if a property is in a single-family neighborhood, the City typically finds a developer willing to build a house on the property. Giving this property to the developer significantly lowers the price point for homebuyers. If the property is sold, most of these dollars go into a fund that is used to incentivize developers to build in areas that are in the greatest need of affordable housing.

The class also reviewed a variety of federal and state programs that can be used by developers. Mayor Trantalis noted that there is significant affordable housing in the City's Flagler Village and Northwest Community Reinvestment Agency (CRA) areas. He advised that there is nothing new in development at the moment, and the City is asked to remain apprised of the programs already at work within its boundaries.

Chair Stewart asked if there was discussion of any revenue streams in addition to the sale of City-owned properties. Mayor Trantalis replied that Broward County has established a fund for affordable housing, using money from general revenues;

however, this is reserved for the County's own projects. He was not optimistic that the City would receive any County funds for affordable housing.

Mayor Trantalis continued that some communities have added a millage point to their taxes in order to generate money for affordable housing. In Fort Lauderdale, the addition of one mill would generate approximately \$130 million each year; however, this would also be equivalent to a 25% tax increase, which is not a possibility. One issue facing Fort Lauderdale is the fact that rental is more expensive per square foot than in any other South Florida municipality.

Chair Stewart asked if any new incentives are under consideration to address the gap in types of affordable housing, pointing out that most incentives are geared toward larger-scale projects with a large number of units while fewer incentive programs address lower-scale projects such as duplexes, garden apartments, or homes. Mayor Trantalis noted that some parcels currently on the existing Police Station site may become available in the next few years for affordable housing, as the station is expected to redevelop using only a portion of its current footprint. The site could accommodate a mixture of types of housing, including mid-rise development, town homes, and/or micro-units, to create a campus environment.

Mayor Trantalis continued that the Police Station site is located on a bus route and within City limits. He estimated that housing could be provided for four to five hundred lower-income workers in Fort Lauderdale, and emphasized that a mixed demographic base maintains the most sustainable urban environments.

Chair Stewart noted that Ms. Wilkinson had provided the Committee members with a list of incentive recommendations, some of which have already been adopted by the City. He encouraged the members to review this information and direct any questions to Ms. Wilkinson for distribution to the rest of the Committee.

Ms. Wilkinson recalled that the Committee is asked to develop an Affordable Housing Incentive Plan. This has recently been required on an annual rather than a triannual basis. While the City did not receive any State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) funds for the current year, SHIP has proposed that some funds will be received in fiscal year (FY) 2021-2022. The goal is to have the Incentive Plan complete before December 2021.

Mayor Trantalis left the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- **Economic and Development Manager – Daphnee Sainvil**

Ms. Wilkinson introduced Daphnee Sainvil, who is the City's new Government and External Affairs Manager. Ms. Sainvil advocates on behalf of the City's legislative

priorities and funding issues on the state, local, and federal levels. She also manages the City's Economic and Community Investment Division, which attracts and retains businesses to Fort Lauderdale.

Ms. Sainvil provided a brief update from the Florida Legislature. The Affordable Housing Trust Fund bill, which prevented the state's Sadowski Fund for affordable housing from being swept in previous years, has passed the Senate as Senate Bill 510 and is before the Appropriations Committee. The House version of this bill has not yet cleared its first subcommittee.

At the federal level, the Biden/Harris administration has focused on providing funds for rental and housing assistance. The City plans to lobby the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for a share of these dollars.

Ms. Wilkinson observed that while there is a focus on rental assistance as part of COVID-19 relief, mortgages are an issue for which the City has nothing to offer at present. Ms. Sainvil replied that the current response is forbearance; however, member-directed spending or "earmarks" have been brought back at the federal level, which can provide direct funding at the request of a representative or senator.

Ms. Nothard asked if there are opportunities to offset the developers' costs of inclusionary zoning in the City, in which a portion of units are set aside for affordable housing. Ms. Sainvil recalled that in 2020, the State Legislature passed a bill limiting efforts aimed at inclusionary zoning. She suggested that the City may be able to use opportunity zones and impact fees to its advantage. Another option is using the Florida Housing Finance Corporation to help incentivize developers to build affordable housing. Although Broward County has three guaranteed funding avenues for this entity, builders do not often choose to come to either the County or the City to build.

Vice Chair Epstein asked if there is a way to incentivize the renovation or expansion of existing low-income housing that is already part of the system. Chair Stewart noted that rehabilitation is a more likely option than expansion for these properties.

V. AGENDA TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING

Chair Stewart strongly encouraged the Committee members to review the information provided by Ms. Wilkinson with respect to the 2021 Workplan.

VI. GOOD OF THE ORDER

VII. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING DATE – April 12th, 2021

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

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There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 9:52 a.m.

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

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]