



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**Approved**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE**  
**AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE**  
**CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS**  
**1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR CITY HALL**  
**MONDAY, JULY 11, 2022 – 9:00 A.M.**

**Cumulative**

<b>Committee Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>January-December 2022</b>	
		<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Brandon Stewart, Chair	P	7	0
Margi Nothard, Vice Chair	P	6	2
Leeann Barber	P	1	0
Alexander Coffey	A	0	3
William Condon	P	7	0
Leighton Lindo	P	3	2
Reed Solberg	P	6	0
Ryan Wipplinger	P	6	1
Mayor Dean Trantalis / Scott Wyman, Alternate	P	6	1

**Staff**

Avis Wilkinson, Housing Programs Administrator/Staff Liaison  
Denise Graham, Senior Administrative Assistant  
Russell Casteel, Construction Review Specialist  
Larry Szeliga, Construction Review Specialist  
Carla Blair, 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 9:04 a.m. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

Chair Stewart noted that the term of former Committee member Edwin Parke has expired, and recognized Mr. Parke for his years of service to the community.

Chair Stewart also welcomed new Committee member Leeann Barber.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 13, 2022**

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

### **III. OLD BUSINESS**

- **Affordable Housing Trust Fund Balance – Avis A. Wilkinson**

Ms. Wilkinson reported that the balance of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund remains at \$614,235.09. No funds are encumbered at this time.

- **Update on Habitat Housing Project**

Ms. Wilkinson stated that this project is currently undergoing Phase 2 environmental review. She has requested information from the organization, including its Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) certification through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Once this information has been provided, the project will be able to advance.

Ms. Wilkinson continued that the project will use CHDO funds rather than State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) funds. CHDO funds are not required to be paid back as long as the project meets the conditions of its affordability period. For new construction, this period is typically 20 years. CHDOs must be recertified annually, as well as whenever they are awarded any type of funds.

### **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

- **HCD Housing Rehabilitation Projects – Larry Szeliga & Russell Casteel**

Ms. Wilkinson explained that Housing and Community Development undertakes rehabilitation projects for residents with low incomes. Larry Szeliga and Russell Casteel are two of the Department's Construction Review Specialists, who inspect the properties to be rehabilitated and maintain communication with the property owners and contractors throughout the process.

The City provides two types of repairs: minor repairs, which may cost up to \$30,000, and substantial repairs, which can cost up to \$60,000. Minor repairs place a 10-year lien on the property, while substantial repairs have 15-year liens. These time frames are considered the affordability period for the property, which means the owners must be the primary residents of that property for the duration of the lien. If the owner sells the property before this affordability period has expired, they are required to repay the City. Another option is subordination, which means after the property has had a lien for at least one year, the City will subordinate the lien if the owner meets program requirements.

Ms. Wilkinson also introduced Denise Graham, Senior Administrative Assistant for the Department of Housing and Community Development, who oversees and reviews applications. She is responsible for the flow of the intake process.

Chair Stewart requested additional information on subordination. Ms. Wilkinson explained that after a lien has been placed on a property, an owner seeking to modify or cash out must procure a document from Housing and Community Development to take to their lender, which states that the lien can be removed and later reinstated. This serves as a temporary override to the lien. The owner must meet a number of criteria, including a requirement to use at least 51% of the funds toward home repairs. The interest rate for refinancing must be at least two points lower than what is already in place. This permits the owner to subordinate the City's lien.

Larry Szeliga, Construction Review Specialist, showed a PowerPoint presentation on the services provided by Housing and Community Development to allow homeowners to address issues with their homes, which may include general repairs or Code Compliance issues. These may include new roofs, doors, or windows, air conditioning, or rebuilding of driveways or fences, among others. He emphasized that there can be enormous challenges to maintain housing stock within Fort Lauderdale.

Russell Casteel, Construction Review Specialist, reviewed the City's priority list, which is used to determine what type of rehabilitation must be done to homes. This list includes the following considerations:

- Code violations on the property
- Health and safety problems in the home
- Improvements to assist elderly residents
- Pest control
- Electrical deficiencies
- Water heater or air conditioning issues
- Plumbing problems
- Roof and window issues
- Installation of Energy Star items or appliances
- Structural integrity
- Permitting issues

Mr. Casteel explained that the priority list serves as a tool for research on the property so the City can determine which improvements are needed. The Department of Sustainable Development (DSD), which includes the Building Department, assists with this research by determining whether or not the appropriate permits were pulled for repairs, the age of the structure or roof, and other aspects of the home's past permit history.

Staff also researches structures through the Broward County Property Appraiser's Office. This can help determine how long the resident has owned the home, whether the property is located within a flood zone, and other information. Staff also determines whether lead testing is necessary based on the age of the home.

Early in 2020, prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Housing and Community Development was on track to complete 18 to 25 rehab projects. After the pandemic began, however, they completed roughly 15 projects in 2020 and again in 2021. In 2022, the Department has completed six rehab projects in the first two quarters of the year and are on track to finish 14 projects by the end of the third quarter. They expect to complete 18 to 25 projects by the end of 2022.

Mr. Casteel explained that once applications and research are complete, the Construction Review Specialists receive notice to inspect qualifying homes. The team discusses the issues with the homeowner to prioritize their needs. They prepare a scope of work, which is then signed by the client. The scope is sent to the City's Procurement Department for approval. Staff organizes a pre-bid site inspection meeting at the home with prospective contractors, who then prepare and submit their bids. Once bids have been received, Staff meets again with the client, accepts the appropriate bid, and prepares for a homeowner/contractor meeting to begin the work. Paperwork and permits are secured before work may begin.

After work begins, the Construction Review Specialists inspect the property to ensure work is up to par. The Building Department also inspects this work. Once the work and inspections are complete, the project is finalized, closeout forms are prepared, and Staff informs the client of any warranties on the work done.

Mr. Szeliga advised that depending upon the grant funds used, which may include Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars, homes must be tested for lead. Other requirements may include environmental review of projects.

Mr. Szeliga emphasized the importance of helping Fort Lauderdale residents maintain their homes in a structurally sound and energy-efficient manner. When Housing and Community Development undertakes a project, they strive to provide homeowners with better conditions than they have at present. This may include assistance with energy efficiency, which can drive down expenses for the homeowner.

The City also assists with new construction, providing more than what is necessary according to Code requirements. This may include additional insulation or impact-resistant windows and doors. The team showed "before and after" photos of rehab work done on a number of Fort Lauderdale homes.

Chair Stewart asked for the number of projects applied for to Housing and Community Development. Ms. Graham estimated that 40 to 55 applications are received each year. Most of the applications come from City Commission District 3. Mr. Casteel acknowledged that due to price increases following the recent pandemic, it is not possible to make as many improvements as the City was once able to provide.

Ms. Wilkinson recalled that in the past, substantial repairs outweighed minor repairs by a 2:1 ratio. Due to funding constraints, however, they now focus primarily on minor

repairs. Most of this work uses CDBG dollars. If bids are too high, some of the repairs will have to be removed from the scope of work to keep costs below the \$30,000 minor repair threshold.

Ms. Wilkinson continued that the City will also no longer take on reconstruction projects. Rising costs have also affected the ability to perform reconstruction.

Chair Stewart asked at what point homeowners usually apply to the City for rehab assistance. Ms. Wilkinson explained that the City advertises when funding is available. The CDBG program for minor repairs, for example, will open after October 1, 2022, at the beginning of the new fiscal year. Substantial rehab, including special needs upgrades for homeowners who have disabilities, are funded using SHIP dollars. Rental housing for senior citizens is also a concern at present.

Chair Stewart asked if the Broward County Property Appraiser's Office collects information on the increased assessed value of a home that has undergone rehabilitation. Ms. Wilkinson stated that the homeowner is advised that they may see an increase in their property taxes once the work is complete; however, the City does not track this increase itself.

Ms. Nothard asked if the City offers fee waivers for permitting for rehab projects. Ms. Wilkinson replied that these fees are not waived, although these projects receive additional support when going through the Building Department's processes. The Housing and Community Development Manager is working with DSD to develop a separate process specifically for affordable housing. Mr. Szeliga advised that the Building Department has helped to expedite the permitting process for some rehab projects. Ms. Wilkinson noted that there is now an electronic permitting process in place for contractors; in addition, Housing and Community Development projects can be flagged within the system so their process is expedited.

Ms. Nothard asked how the waiting list for rehab projects is prioritized. Ms. Graham explained that once a homeowner on the list is contacted, they have a certain time period in which to send in their application. She reiterated that the waiting list is no longer in use, as the current system is based on the amount of funding available for applications on a first come, first served basis.

Mr. Condon asked what commitments are required of a homeowner to maintain their improved property in good repair. Ms. Graham replied that there are no such commitments. Ms. Wilkinson added that the homeowner is not required to bring anything to the table other than the necessary documentation. Other cities may require the homeowner to pay an application fee or pay for a portion of the work.

Ms. Wilkinson continued that the homeowner is required to live in the home during its 10- or 15-year affordability period. Should the homeowner choose to sell the property before this period is complete, they must pay back the full amount of the improvement.

Mr. Solberg requested clarification of the front-end costs of energy-efficient improvements, such as solar panels. Mr. Casteel replied that one home received \$30,000 worth of panels, as well as electrical work based on the type of system installed. Other homes have received even more panels, which drive down the homeowners' utility costs significantly.

Mr. Solberg asked how long solar panels can be expected to save the homeowner money. Mr. Casteel advised that these items have a 15- to 20-year lifespan. He noted that it can be difficult to replace solar panels on rooftops, as this can create leaks.

Chair Stewart asked if there are any issues on which the Committee may be of assistance. Mr. Szeliga stated that since the COVID-19 pandemic, costs have increased tremendously, which limits the amount of work the City can do for homeowners. Ms. Graham commented that she would like to lessen the turnaround time for projects, noting that approval from the Building or Legal Departments can result in significant delay.

Chair Stewart asked how the \$30,000 and \$60,000 thresholds for minor and substantial repairs are established. Ms. Wilkinson explained that this was established by the City for the program, which has limited funding. These amounts were more reasonable prior to the pandemic, but have been affected by changes in the cost of materials.

Chair Stewart asked how large the City's rehab budget would need to be to return to completing 20 to 25 projects per year. Ms. Wilkinson noted that the team may be able to complete 25 projects in 2022; however, they will be minor rather than substantial repairs, focusing on roofs, windows, doors, electrical/AC work, hot water heaters, and plumbing.

Ms. Nothard requested clarification of the delta increase in the cost of minor repairs from fiscal year (FY) 2021 to FY 2022. Mr. Casteel replied that some items have increased in price more than others: for example, roof and window costs have increased significantly, and there are supply chain issues to consider as well. The percentage of cost increase varies from one item to the next. Mr. Szeliga agreed that the cost of roofing materials has seen the greatest increase.

Ms. Barber asked if the City has done any work to survey its existing housing stock and determine how many homes are in need of specific types of repairs, such as roof or window replacement. She pointed out that this would provide a better sense of how much work is necessary throughout the City and what type of strategy could be used to address it. Mr. Szeliga noted that there are other agencies that can help with repairs. He added that the City's housing stock to the east is more expensive and better maintained than the housing stock to the west. Some of this information is available through the Broward County Property Appraiser's Office.

Mr. Szeliga concluded that some homeowners will not reach out to the City for assistance due to the lien that would be placed on their property, although the City's service is free.

**V. AGENDA TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING**

Chair Stewart requested an update on the progress of a presentation from the DSD. Ms. Wilkinson replied that the Department has been asked to make changes to the Ordinance they submitted to the City Commission. She offered to send the Committee members copies of the City Commission Agenda Item as additional information.

Chair Stewart advised that United Way's updated Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) report will not be ready for presentation until toward the end of the calendar year.

Ms. Wilkinson requested that the Committee members send their incentive proposals to her by close of business on Thursday, July 28, 2022.

**VI. GOOD OF THE ORDER**

None.

**VII. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING DATE – August 8, 2022**

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 10:28 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.]