



Approved
MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE CITY
COMMISSION CHAMBERS
1ST FLOOR CITY HALL
MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2023 – 9:00 A.M.

Cumulative

Committee Members	January-December 2023		
	Attendance	Present	Absent
Margi Nothard, Chair	A	2	1
Leann Barber, Vice Chair	P	3	0
William Condon	A	2	1
Susan Spragg	P	3	0
Ryan Wipplinger	P	2	1
Comm . Dr. Pamela Beasley-Pittman	P	3	0

Staff

Avis Wilkinson, Assistant Housing and Community Development Manager / SHIP Administrator / Staff Liaison
 Carla Blair, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communication to the City Commission

None.

I. ROLL CALL / DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

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

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 13 , 2023

Motion made by Ms. Spragg, seconded by Mr. Wipplinger, to approve. [The minutes were approved by consent.]

III. OLD BUSINESS

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

Ms. Wilkinson advised that the Affordable Housing Trust Fund balance remains \$0. She reminded the Committee members that the Trust Fund is funded through 100% of the net

proceeds from the sale of City-owned residential properties, as well as 15% of the net proceeds from the sale of City-owned commercial properties.

- **Update on Habitat Housing Project**

Ms. Wilkinson reported that the Habitat for Humanity project, known as BBI Village, continues to move forward. Habitat for Humanity is in discussions with the City regarding the project's infrastructure, as they would prefer to avoid the additional costs associated with privatization. The Department of Development Services is working with the City's Public Services Director to find a solution.

- **Additional Affordable Housing Information from Broward Housing Needs Study**

Ms. Wilkinson provided the most current information on Fort Lauderdale from the Affordable Housing Needs Study, including the number of affordable housing units and the percentage these units contribute to the number of units available in Broward County. She noted that while there were 95,843 units in 2017, this stock has decreased to 95,057 in 2020. The study also lists Broward County's inventory of housing units by type, including single-family and multi-family, as well as the change in the number of these units each year.

Broward County's median sales price for an existing single-family home was \$720,000 as of the first quarter of 2022. A one-bedroom apartment in Fort Lauderdale rents for an average of \$2547, while a two-bedroom unit averages \$3374 and a three-bedroom unit averages \$4801. A housing demand analysis from 2007 showed that Fort Lauderdale contributed 177,175 units to Broward County, which increased to 181,801 by 2020. Fort Lauderdale is the largest municipality in Broward County.

Elements affecting housing demand include growth, changes in the labor market and industrial base, migration patterns, housing values, household income, and household composition. In 2020, the City's poverty rate was 15.8%, while Broward County's poverty rate has decreased from 14% in 2017 to 12.7% in 2020.

The median household income in Fort Lauderdale in 2020 was \$64,313. The affordable median price for a home was \$192,939 at that time; however, the actual sales price in the first quarter of 2021 averaged the \$720,000 cited earlier. Most Fort Lauderdale residents cannot afford to buy a house or condominium. Ms. Wilkinson advised that many housing plans now include consideration of transportation, with a goal of building houses around transportation hubs.

The existing housing supply and demand analysis reflects household income categories, which apply to both owners and renters. The population served by the City's Department of Housing and Community Development includes extremely low to low-income households, which earn 30% to 80% of the median income respectively. There is a significant gap between what the market will allow and what residents can afford.

The City can provide up to \$75,000 through its Purchase Assistance Program to help prospective homeowners with down payment assistance or closing costs. Ms. Wilkinson cautioned, however, that the program cannot help residents if they cannot find a house they can afford. The City's maximum purchase price for an existing house is \$331,000, which is based on guidelines from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). There is not enough gap financing available for the City to bring costs down to a level that many households can afford.

Ms. Wilkinson advised that the Home Investment Partnerships Program used by the City for purchase assistance can only finance homes for households earning 80% or less of the area median income. State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) funds are not used for purchase assistance, but primarily for home ownership projects.

Vice Chair Barber requested clarification of the source of the information provided. Ms. Wilkinson replied that it comes from the 2022 Broward County Affordable Housing Needs Assessment. She added that she would re-send this report to the Committee members.

Vice Chair Barber asked if the City has programs which assist renters. Ms. Wilkinson stated that the City has programs for very selective groups of renters, including Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) rental assistance for households that continue to struggle due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Any household which can prove a COVID-19-related hardship may apply. This program can provide up to six months' worth of rent, including rental increases for that time period.

SHIP also offers a program exclusively for renters aged 62 years or older who have experienced hardship. This program also provides up to six months of rental assistance. The hardship may include death of a partner or decrease in income.

Another program, which is offered by HOPE South Florida, assists individuals and families who have registered with Broward County's Homeless Help Line and received a certificate showing this status. They may contact HOPE South Florida, which will help them find a home and will pay rent for up to 24 months, as well as first and last security deposits. They will not assist households, however, who have not registered with the County's help line and received a certificate.

Vice Chair Barber commented that one of the report's charts shows an approximate gap of 7000 to 8000 units in the extremely low and low-income levels, although there is a surplus of moderate-income units. She asked if there is a plan to address how these units could be made more affordable. Ms. Wilkinson explained that the City has used American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds for some affordable projects, including affordable rental housing.

The City also anticipates over \$2 million in SHIP funds, although this amount may change as it goes through the system. If these funds are received, at least 25% of the total will go toward rental development. The City has mandates that must be met using SHIP funds, such as requirements that 75% must be used toward construction and 65% for home ownership. 25% of SHIP funds must also be used toward populations with special needs, such as disabled veterans, individuals with developmental disabilities, or youth that have aged out of foster care.

Ms. Spragg referred to a chart showing median gross rent costs, requesting clarification of the difference between this and the average one-bedroom market rate rent. Ms. Wilkinson advised that she would look into this further for clarification.

Ms. Wilkinson stated that the Committee members were also sent information about Florida House Bill (HB) 102, which proposes mandating a number of efforts related to affordable housing. This bill can be discussed in greater depth at a later meeting.

Ms. Wilkinson continued that SHIP proposes to send \$2.163 million to Fort Lauderdale in fiscal year (FY) 2023-2024. These dollars can be used to provide forgivable loans to homeowners who continue to reside in their home during its period of affordability. The City typically requires homeowners to remain in these houses for 15 years. Should the owner sell the home before that period has elapsed, they must repay the full amount to the City. These terms also apply to homes bought with the City's Purchase Assistance Program.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- **Guest Speaker Ebonni Crispin regarding housing opportunities regarding flex units**

As the guest speaker was not present, this Item was not presented.

- **Transitional Housing**

Vice Chair Barber explained that while there are shelters and affordable housing, there is no transition between these two modes of housing. Broward County offers a limited

number of shelters which fall into two categories. There are shelters that require individuals to remove their belongings regularly. Vice Chair Barber cited the Salvation Army facilities as an example of this type of shelter. The other type of shelter provides dormitory-style housing for up to six months, including lockers for belongings, and offers programs to its residents.

Vice Chair Barber continued that some companies are now constructing prefabricated units which can be installed in a very short time. These units typically offer a small private room with electricity, with a limited number of units per location. The benefit of this type of housing is that it allows individuals or families a place to lock up their possessions and return to every night. The units provide short-term transitional housing, which offer the stability an individual may need to work their way up to an apartment unit. Several cities around the U.S. operate these types of facilities, which provide crisis housing and safety to individuals who would otherwise be homeless.

Vice Chair Barber recalled that this idea has been presented to Broward County, although the County did not choose to pursue it. She felt Fort Lauderdale should explore this option further, as it is gaining in popularity.

Ms. Wilkinson noted that transitional housing is defined as temporary housing with supportive services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, with the goal of providing interim stability and support to successfully move them into permanent housing. Transitional projects may cover housing costs and offer accompanying services for program participants for up to 24 months. She explained that this is similar to the City's tenant-based rental voucher (TBRV) program, which is offered by organizations such as HOPE South Florida. Another agency offering transitional housing is Broward House, which also works to transition individuals and families from shelters to transitional and then to permanent housing.

The City also plans to issue a request for proposal (RFP) for a non-congregate shelter, which provides a space where individuals and families may stay and are not required to pay rent. This RFP would use the Home ARP funds mentioned earlier. Ms. Wilkinson noted, however, that operating costs may be a concern, as the Home ARP funds may not be used for operations.

Vice Chair Barber asked if the Committee could see a presentation by HOPE South Florida. Ms. Wilkinson confirmed that this can be done.

Commissioner Dr. Beasley-Pittman asked if the different types of shelters offer a plan to move individuals and families from emergency shelter into transitional and then permanent housing. Ms. Wilkinson advised that organizations such as Broward House and HOPE South Florida manage these programs effectively.

Vice Chair Barber pointed out that it can be difficult for homeless individuals and families who are outside the system to work their way into that system to access services and shelter support. There can be a lack of clarity to this process for persons who are not familiar with the system and are not earning income. She felt there should be a way to target and help this population. Ms. Wilkinson noted that there may be supportive services that can assist them in moving toward permanent housing, although not all persons experiencing homelessness can be expected to achieve full self-sufficiency.

Vice Chair Barber stated that even if an individual cannot become self-sufficient, there should be housing alternatives that offer them safety and dignity. She noted that most programs offer a limited time frame for housing. Ms. Wilkinson emphasized the importance of providing the appropriate social services to assist this population.

- **Affordable Housing Incentive Plan – Getting Started**

Ms. Wilkinson advised that she will send the Committee members information on the Affordable Housing Incentive Plan, which will focus on the use of accessory dwelling units to create some affordable housing. The Committee can work to persuade the City Commission to do more with this type of housing. It can offer additional income to families who rent their accessory units while also offering affordable rental space.

V. AGENDA TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING

Ms. Spragg suggested that the Committee discuss putting together a “decision package” for the City’s 2023-2024 budget to improve line item funds related to affordable housing. She offered to take the lead on this effort.

Ms. Wilkinson noted that because the City’s Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs) are scheduled to sunset in 2025, there has been discussion of sending a portion of these agencies’ tax increment financing (TIF) dollars to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Ms. Wilkinson asked if the Committee wished to table a discussion of attending the upcoming SHIP conference until other members are present. The conference will be held in Orlando and will address contemporary topics related to affordable housing. The conference is presented by the Florida Housing Coalition, which is the technical arm of the Florida Housing Finance Corporation.

VI. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Ms. Wilkinson confirmed that there are multiple vacancies on the Committee at this time. The Committee is authorized to have up to 12 members, who must reside or have business in Fort Lauderdale.

VII. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING DATE – April 10, 2023

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 10:09 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.]