



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

Approved
MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FIRE STATION #2, 528 NW 2ND STREET
3RD FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA 33311
MONDAY, MAY 8, 2023 – 9:00 A.M.

Cumulative

Committee Members	January-December 2023		
	Attendance	Present	Absent
Margi Nothard, Chair	P	4	1
Leann Barber, Vice Chair	P	5	0
William Condon	P	4	1
Khiafra James	A	0	2
Susan Spragg	P	5	0
Solomon Williams	P	1	1
Ryan Wipplinger	P	3	2
Vice Mayor Dr. Pamela Beasley-Pittman	P	5	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

Chair Nothard called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – APRIL 10 , 2023

Motion made by Vice Chair Barber, seconded by Mr. Condon, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Mr. Wipplinger arrived at 9:05 a.m.

III. OLD BUSINESS

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

Ms. Wilkinson stated that this balance remains at \$0.

- **Update on Habitat Housing Project – Habitat – BBI Village Project**

Ms. Wilkinson stated that Habitat for Humanity is still in discussions with the City regarding a potential development agreement with the City. If the City Manager signs this agreement, it will then go before the City Commission for approval. The project will include 18 town homes. The primary issue delaying the project involves utilities.

Vice Mayor Dr. Beasley-Pittman arrived at 9:07 a.m.

- **May 8, 2023 – Guest Speaker – Ebonni N. Crispin, Legislative Affairs and Community Engagement Director AIDS Healthcare Foundation / Healthy Housing Foundation**

Ebonni Crispin, Director of Legislative Affairs and Community Engagement for the AIDS Healthcare Foundation/Healthy Housing Foundation, explained that this organization was established in Los Angeles, California approximately seven years ago. At the time, its primary goal was to respond to a lack of housing in that area, which continues to this day. The Healthy Housing Foundation (HHF), through its parent company, the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, purchased dilapidated hotels and transformed them into transitional housing for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Ms. Crispin advised that from HHF's perspective in South Florida, a housing crisis was underway before the COVID-19 pandemic. Their goals are to build more homes and to identify policies that could provide more affordable housing in a systemically changing manner. In the session that ended on Friday, May 5, 2023, the Florida Legislature passed policies that would make it more difficult for cities and counties to do work in the field of affordable housing, such as rent stabilization or sustaining tenants' rights. HHF is working to determine how they should advocate for policies in the future.

Ms. Crispin continued that HHF is also working with entities such as the City of Fort Lauderdale to support more affordable housing for households earning low and very low incomes. Most affordable housing in the area is targeted at households earning roughly 60% of the area median income (AMI). HHF does not ask for any City funding or tax dollars, as they are 100% privately funded.

Ms. Crispin observed that Miami-Dade County has been friendly to the construction of affordable housing. HHF secures building permits and conducts outreach to communities; however, the city of Miami has been open to a partnership that simplifies the bureaucratic process. HHF has funded two projects in Miami-Dade County, both of which will be new construction.

Ms. Crispin stated that HHF has purchased a property in Fort Lauderdale and has brought it up to Code so residents may move in immediately. She emphasized the importance of responding to the affordable housing crisis in a similar way to the emergency response to a hurricane, which involves multiple parties working to address the issue together.

There are between 20,000 and 30,000 individuals and families in Broward County who are considered housing-insecure. Ms. Crispin advised that Broward County is not currently responding to this crisis with the urgency necessary to address the issue. She noted, however, that Fort Lauderdale is the only Broward municipality that has responded to the housing crisis.

HHF had intended to convert a property in Downtown Fort Lauderdale near their offices. They were eventually told the project was too dense, and would create additional delays in the existing emergency rescue system for residents who live south of the tunnel. Since that time, however, a development has been approved to the north of the proposed parcel which has even greater density.

Ms. Crispin continued that the recent flooding in Broward County and other locations demonstrate the effects of climate change as well as overdevelopment. This means HHF and other providers will need to determine how to respond to households whose housing insecurity is even greater due to climate-related issues. HHF emphasizes public-private partnerships and works with other agencies to develop innovative and proven ideas in response to the housing crisis.

Sister Robin Merrill, also representing HHF, pointed out the importance of healthy housing, particularly in light of events such as the recent flood, which can contribute to health risks such as mold. She asserted that the minimum HHF can do is ensure that their housing will be healthy by addressing environmental and sustainability issues. She also noted the need to address changing climate conditions in South Florida.

Vice Chair Barber commented that she did not feel the City should be involved in any type of housing other than high-rise affordable housing, transitional housing, or microhousing, as these represent the best investment of funds. She was also in favor of making these rental units only until everyone has been housed.

Ms. Crispin stated that next steps will be for HHF to determine how to bring the City on board with ideas such as those expressed by the Vice Chair. Other ideas that could be adopted into policy in the future include the use of flex units or inclusionary housing.

Mr. Williams requested clarification of the criteria that must be met by tenants who live in HHF's affordable units. Ms. Crispin replied that tenants must provide proof of income and be able to pass a background check. HHF provides housing for households with low and very low incomes.

Vice Mayor Dr. Beasley-Pittman asked if HHF had any suggestions on how to shift the public mindset away from a "not in my back yard" mentality with regard to affordable housing. Ms. Crispin advised that they recommend cities invest in prejudice reduction. HHF has worked with a nonprofit entity in South Florida which participated in a public outreach campaign to determine how individuals feel about low-income housing. This

campaign demonstrated that when the canvassers shared personal experiences related to affordable housing, some of the stigmas associated with this housing were alleviated. Regular public service announcements and “town hall” meetings have also been successful.

Ms. Crispin continued that HHF has also met with the presidents of homeowners’ associations in South Florida, with mixed success. She concluded that it is also helpful to engage individuals in discussions of these issues in order to dispel fears. Changes in individual housing markets can take 12 to 18 months before they are noticeable. Sister Merrill also spoke in favor of regular public service announcements to address this perception issue.

Mr. Wipplinger requested additional information on the resistance shown by some developers to HHF projects. Ms. Crispin clarified that projects have been met with resistance from surrounding homeowners’ associations, and some developers have indicated they would be interested in developing certain parcels with luxury or market-rate housing instead.

Ms. Spragg asked which other organizations partner with the Healthy Housing Foundation. Ms. Crispin replied that they have done some work with the Urban League of Broward, which is interested in building inclusionary housing. They have undertaken projects on their own as well as in partnership with municipalities. She described a project in which HHF provided \$100 million to Miami-Dade County to assist with the housing crisis there: while that County did not bring any funds to the partnership, they did not make it difficult to pursue the project.

Mr. Condon requested additional information on what HHF and the City of Fort Lauderdale may be able to partner on. Ms. Crispin stated that they hope the City will identify available land, or potential partnerships with groups such as churches, synagogues, or community organizations, for future projects. They typically seek to build projects with more than 125 units. The City may also assist HHF in negotiations for the purchase of land for affordable housing.

Ms. Crispin continued that HHF has gone back to the drawing board following the passage of legislation that is likely to make their work more difficult. They are working with municipalities to identify potential solutions in light of this legislation.

Mr. Condon asked if HHF is engaged in any housing work intended to address the recent flooding crisis. Ms. Crispin clarified that they are not: instead, they are working to determine what the City Commission plans to do to address issues such as overdevelopment and the effects of climate change.

Sister Merrill advised that there should also be stated goals to address the housing crisis, noting that while the City Commission has indicated the changes they would like to see, there are no ways to enforce those changes. She suggested that HHF and the Committee

could work together to change or implement a stated goal in the near term. She characterized the City's current State of Emergency as an opportunity to change priorities and goals, and to acknowledge that the effects of climate change and sea level rise will make it unlikely that the City can return to "normal."

Vice Chair Barber asked for HHF's opinion on crisis housing in trailers, which could be made available for homeowners in the short term. Ms. Crispin replied that many South Florida cities and counties make it difficult to provide trailers or modular homes, and these are not widely considered even as temporary solutions.

Sister Merrill commented that one suggestion from the public has been for the new City Commission to hold a public workshop, which could be the first step in hearing new ideas on how to address the housing crisis. She reiterated that the State of Emergency has created a new relationship between the City and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and that this state could be extended if necessary in order to allow for emergency housing.

Vice Chair Barber stated that she felt the first step in moving people out of homelessness was the designation of a shelter or camp, with individual units that allow households a place to sleep and secure their belongings. Chair Nothard observed that some cities are using underutilized parking lots for the purpose of providing temporary housing with restroom and shower facilities on-site.

Ms. Crispin noted that while some cities have taken this step, it is not always successful. There are also programs that help individuals and households transition from these shelters or camps to more sustainable homes. Vice Chair Barber added that many of these households also need a way to raise their incomes to a level that can afford more permanent housing.

Vice Mayor Dr. Beasley-Pittman advised that she has learned the City's amount of surplus land that could be used for affordable housing is very low, which is also a challenge. Ms. Crispin pointed out that the "not in my back yard" mentality can prevent them from developing affordable housing on available properties; in addition, many of the City-owned properties are too small to be developed with the typical number of units that HHF seeks to build.

Ms. Crispin asked what type of follow-up action the Committee may wish to take after today's presentation. Chair Nothard replied that the Committee will further discuss the presentation in light of the 2023 Affordable Housing Incentive Plan, which requires the Committee to make recommendations to the City Commission. The Committee is not empowered to make decisions for the City.

Ms. Wilkinson added that the City's Housing and Community Development Division may be able to provide HHF with additional directives and suggestions in the future. She recalled that the City plans to release a request for proposal (RFP) for the construction of

a non-congregate shelter, using funds provided from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and noted that hotels can easily be converted into these types of shelters. This may be an opportunity for HHF.

Ms. Wilkinson continued that the City plans to make more opportunities available to Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) that meet HUD requirements to provide affordable housing. She suggested that HHF may wish to consider becoming a CHDO.

- **2023 Affordable Housing Incentive Plan**

Ms. Wilkinson recommended postponing discussion of this Item until the next meeting, when more time could be allocated to the topic. Chair Nothard strongly encouraged the Committee members to view the information Ms. Wilkinson had sent them regarding Florida's recently passed Live Local Act, as it provides comprehensive background information on what is required by that legislation.

The Affordable Housing Incentive Plan was previously due every three years, but has recently become an annual requirement. The 2023 Plan will be submitted to the City Commission following the September Committee meeting.

Chair Nothard requested that any members who are able to view the presentation through the link provided be prepared to discuss it at the next meeting, including any opportunities that the Committee may be able to implement or build upon.

Ms. Spragg recalled that at the April meeting, the Committee had also discussed reviewing items that have already been implemented to assist with affordable housing, such as placing 100% of the revenue from the sale of City-owned residential parcels, as well as 15% of the net proceeds from the sale of City-owned commercial properties, into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Ms. Spragg also noted that there had been discussion of having Staff address how the Live Local Act may affect Fort Lauderdale policies, as well as the possibility of a joint workshop with the City Commission. Ms. Wilkinson advised that the link to the presentation on the Live Local Act will show how this legislation supports affordable housing. She also acknowledged that the City Commission often hears the "not in my back yard" response, which can make them less open to affordable housing solutions.

Chair Nothard suggested that at the next meeting, the Committee members identify the affordable housing priorities in which they are most interested and discuss how these may be communicated to the City Commission.

Vice Chair Barber stated that while it was a positive step to put the revenue from the sale of City-owned properties into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, the effects of this decision were limited, as the City transferred ownership of 60 properties from the City to

the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA). This limited the amount that would go into the Trust Fund. Ms. Wilkinson noted, however, that some of these properties were given to nonprofit entities which may build affordable or infill housing on them. She suggested that this could be a presentation the Committee could see in the future.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- **SHIP 2023-2024 funding and proposed allocation**

Ms. Wilkinson announced that the City has just learned its 2023-2024 allocation of State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) funds will be \$2,163,317. She will prepare a City Commission Agenda Item for the acceptance of these funds.

Ms. Wilkinson continued that 10% of SHIP funds are used toward administrative costs, while 20% is allocated toward housing for individuals or households with special needs, such as veterans or individuals with disabilities, youth who have aged out of foster care, or individuals with mental or physical conditions that are considered special needs. SHIP funds can be used to make housing more accommodating for these households.

SHIP dollars can also be used toward emergency repairs through a grant program, which is capped at \$15,000 per household. These emergency repair funds can be used to assist households affected by the recent flood events.

Another use of SHIP funds is rental development for households with low to extremely low incomes. A portion of the funds can also be used toward home ownership for households with low incomes, while another portion is set aside for rapid re-housing.

Ms. Wilkinson concluded that the Committee is asked to give its approval to these uses of SHIP funds:

- Administration: \$216,869.60
- Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation – Special Needs: \$433,739.20
- Emergency Repairs: \$200,000.00
- Rental Development: \$502,174.00
- New Construction – Homeowner: \$775,913.20
- Rapid Re-Housing: \$40,000.00

Motion made by Mr. Condon, and duly seconded, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed 6-1 (Vice Chair Barber dissenting).

Vice Chair Barber explained that she was not in favor of extremely competitive government programs. She also felt some of the smaller allocations, such as \$40,000 for rapid re-housing, could be “worse than no money.” Ms. Wilkinson explained that the City is required to meet the allocations mandated by the SHIP program. Program income, such as the payment of loans, may also be used toward rapid re-housing and other miscellaneous categories.

V. AGENDA TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING

Chair Nothard suggested that transitional housing be added as an Agenda Item for the June 2023 meeting. Ms. Wilkinson noted that this may be added if there is sufficient time, and reiterated that the City plans to issue an RFP for a non-congregate shelter, which will provide transitional housing for a minimum of 10 years.

VI. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Vice Chair Barber requested information regarding a “homeless advisory board” approved by the City Commission. She suggested that there should be coordination between recommendations made by that advisory body and those made by the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee. Vice Mayor Dr. Beasley-Pittman advised that she did not know where the process for the potential creation of this new board stood at present.

VII. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING DATE: June 12th, 2023

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 10:33 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.]