



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

Approved Revised
MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
914 SISTRUNK BOULEVARD, SUITE 100
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA 33311
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2025 – 9:00 A.M.

Cumulative

AHAC Committee Members	2025 Attendance	Present	Absent
Susan Spragg, Chair	P	2	0
Shantel Jairam, Vice Chair	A	1	1
Commissioner Dr. Pamela Beasley-Pittman	P	2	0
William Condon	P	2	0
Rich Degirolamo (via Zoom)	P	2	0
Mindy Figueroa	P	2	0
Willie McKay	P	2	0
Roderick Newkirk	P	1	1
<i>(1/25 absence excused)</i>			
Agustina Sklar	P	1	0
Amanda Wilson	P	2	0

Staff

Avis Wilkinson, Assistant Housing and Community Development Manager/Staff Liaison
Bob Wojcik, CRA Housing and Economic Development Manager
K. Cruitt, Recording Clerk, Prototype, Inc.

Communication to the City Commission

None.

I. ROLL CALL / DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

The meeting was called to order at 9:11 a.m. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

Motion made by Commissioner Dr. Beasley-Pittman, seconded by Ms. McKay, to approve Rich attending via Zoom. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **January 13, 2025**

Motion made by Ms. Figueroa, seconded by Ms. McKay, to approve the minutes. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

The Committee members, including new member Agustina Sklar, introduced themselves at this time.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- **Affordable Housing Trust Fund Balance update**

Ms. Wilkinson reported that the Affordable Housing Trust Fund has a current balance of \$1,141,172.02. She will provide an update on the history of the Trust Fund to the Committee members via email.

- **Habitat's BBI Village update**

Ms. Wilkinson advised that this project is currently in construction. She encouraged the members to view this site.

- **Top 3 – Affordable housing incentives from AHAC members**

Chair Spragg noted that the members have been emailed a list of their top three affordable housing strategies to discuss with the City Commission.

- **AHAC 2025 Workplan**

Ms. Wilkinson stated that the 2025 Workplan is in process. She advised that one of the Committee members had emailed her office with suggested speakers at 2025 meetings, and she will reach out to these individuals and invite them to make presentations at the March, April, and/or May meetings. After that time the Committee will focus on the Affordable Housing Incentive Plan. She encouraged the members to email her with any additional suggested speakers.

Ms. Figueroa requested clarification of the objective of bringing in speakers. Ms. Wilkinson explained that the proposed speakers thus far deal with affordable housing and can provide updates on what the County and other entities are doing. The presentations will be informational in nature.

Mr. Condon stated that he had recommended Patrice Paldino, Director of Housing Options and Solutions for Broward County, be invited to speak to the Committee. Ms. Paldino is in charge of affordable housing and homelessness initiatives for the County. The second recommended speaker is Sandra Veszi Einhorn, who serves on an advisory body at the state level with regard to affordable housing initiatives.

- **Clarification on the City's in lieu of fee Policy**

Ms. Wilkinson recalled that at the January 2025 meeting, the Committee had discussed the City's policy regarding payment in lieu fees. She had reached out to the Urban

Planning and Design Department and reviewed the Ordinance governing payments in lieu, and emailed information on this policy to the members.

The payment in lieu fee is \$10,000 per unit in a development. Residential flexibility units are excluded from satisfying affordable housing set-aside requirements. In-lieu fees are paid at the time of issuance of the building permit. 50% of the total payment in lieu funds will go to the City of Fort Lauderdale, and the remaining 50% will go to Broward County. The City's 50% will be placed in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Chair Spragg recalled that she has compiled payment in lieu information on a spreadsheet, using information from the City's Development Review Committee (DRC) activity as well as from Urban Design and Planning. There are still some existing gaps in this information.

Chair Spragg continued that she will reach out to Urban Design and Planning on a monthly basis in order to remain apprised of potential payment in lieu activity. She added that the Committee should also be able to track the permitting process, which will be addressed later in today's meeting. She estimated that all projects approved for the City will pay a combined total of \$30 million in payments in lieu.

Chair Spragg added that later in today's meeting, under New Business, the Committee would discuss the Affordable Housing Trust Fund policy, including how the Committee may be able to make recommendations about the use of those funds.

Ms. Figueroa suggested developing a scorecard which would show the Committee's recommendations regarding the use of Trust Fund dollars. Chair Spragg recalled that the Committee had discussed this early 2024. Ms. Wilkinson advised that this document would need to be refined: if there is not sufficient specificity, there is a risk that the City Commission could pull funds from the Trust Fund for other uses.

Ms. Wilkinson continued that the Committee will also need to develop the Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP).

Ms. Figueroa emphasized the importance of the Committee aligning their priorities with those of the City Commission. She recommended a scorecard that could measure action and results, possibly on a quarterly basis. Ms. Wilkinson explained that once the Affordable Housing Trust Fund policy is established, the Committee's Action Plan will be part of that document, as it will contain information on various initiatives. She also pointed out that the Committee's February 18, 2025 joint meeting with the City Commission will strictly address the Committee's top three priorities from the Affordable Housing Incentive Plan.

Mr. Newkirk requested clarification that the City cannot remove funds from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to assist with the development of luxury buildings. Ms. Wilkinson replied that while this would be unlikely, some Trust Fund dollars were

provided to entities such as the Housing Authority to assist with affordable development in different neighborhoods. This money has since been repaid into the Trust Fund with interest.

Ms. Wilkinson also advised that when a City-owned residential property is sold, 100% of the net proceeds from that sale go into the Trust Fund. 15% of the net proceeds from the sale of City-owned commercial properties go into the Trust Fund as well. She recalled that this was a significant accomplishment of the Committee in the past.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- **Agenda for February 18, 2025 AHAC / Commissioner Joint Meeting**

The Committee returned to the three top-ranked Incentive Plan priorities which were emailed to the members, which were based on their own prioritizations. The priorities were as follows:

- Expedited processing of approvals for development orders and permits for affordable housing
- Modification of impact fee requirements, including a reduction or waiver of fees, for affordable developments
- Parking requirement modifications

Ms. Wilkinson added that the members have the option at today's meeting to modify this list. The selected incentives will be used to create an Action Plan to stimulate the development of affordable housing. They will be presented to the City Commission at the upcoming joint meeting. The Committee will request direction and support from the Commission with regard to these incentives.

The Committee members discussed the three incentives, with Ms. Figueroa recalling that when she had spoken with her appointing City Commissioner, they had briefly discussed the potential assignation of a percentage of Fort Lauderdale's hospitality tax to go into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. She proposed outreach to key individuals in the hospitality sector, pointing out that a larger workforce will be needed to staff entities such as the new Broward Convention Center and its hotel. These workers will need housing.

Ms. Figueroa continued that the outreach could target representatives of Visit Fort Lauderdale, key representatives of the hotel industry, and others from the hospitality sector to address affordable housing. She emphasized that the assignment of even a small amount from the current hospitality tax could go toward this goal, and recommended that the Committee present a unified front when addressing the Commission.

Chair Spragg noted that there are additional financial and strategic items that are not currently included in the Affordable Housing Incentive Plan as part of the 11 required

elements, and suggested that the Committee advise the Commission that they are reviewing other recommendations that could be brought forward in addition to the three top-ranked incentives listed above.

Commissioner Dr. Beasley-Pittman suggested that the joint workshop may not be the best place and time to bring forward proposals not included in the Incentive Plan. Ms. Figueroa replied that there will be a need for workers at the Convention Center who may not be willing to live a significant distance from the City and commute. She felt this need should be addressed. Commissioner Dr. Beasley-Pittman agreed, but pointed out that in previous joint meetings, it has been possible to lose focus on the conversation with the City Commission. She cautioned against a similar loss of focus if workforce housing is discussed as a priority, and suggested it be brought forward at another time, possibly in quarterly meetings with the Commission to discuss progress.

Ms. Wilson was also in favor of quarterly meetings with the Commission, which could be used to show the Committee's progress over time; however, she also recommended addressing only the top-ranked priorities at the upcoming joint meeting. Ms. Wilkinson noted that there are several more incentives that can be discussed a later date.

- **Guest Speakers for upcoming AHAC Meetings**

This Item was previously discussed.

- **Update from staff on implementation of Neighborly software to analyze affordable housing**

Ms. Wilkinson explained that the City has only recently begun using Neighborly software, and is encouraging residents who apply for services to use this online system instead of paper applications. The City also hopes to use this system for sub-recipients of funds, such as the agencies provided with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars.

Chair Spragg recalled that when she had reached out to Urban Design and Planning, a representative of that Department had advised the Neighborly software is able to track payments in lieu. Ms. Wilkinson replied that she did not have information on when this capability might be introduced. The Neighborly software went live in July 2024 and its implementation remains slow. It is also used by Broward County and many other municipalities.

- **Update from staff on timing and status of updating Affordable Housing Trust Policy**

Ms. Wilkinson advised that she would have more information on this Item at the next Committee meeting. She explained that when the original policy was written, she had sought to tie it to the LHAP, as the policy works best when there is a plan to outline

different programs and strategies that can be funded with Trust Fund dollars. The new document will be separate from the LHAP and will include practical suggestions on how to use Trust Fund money, as it does not include federal funds and therefore its uses are less limited than other dollars.

Ms. Wilkinson continued that Trust Fund dollars can be used to fill the gaps in other programs. She emphasized that the quick use of these funds will be important, as many individuals and families in housing crisis are desperate. Ms. Figueroa added that with the proposed scorecard, the Committee would be able to show the Commission, on a quarterly basis, how the use of Trust Fund money has helped people in the City.

The Committee returned to the three top-ranked recommendations, with Ms. Wilkinson recommending that the members prepare what they would like to say to the Commission. She noted that one recommendation proposed combining the three sources of expedited permitting – the Department of Sustainable Development (DSD) Building Services, the DRC process, and the review process – under a single umbrella, using designated members of the permit solution team to expedite permits for affordable housing over other housing permits.

Ms. Wilson asked if this proposal was feasible for the City. Ms. Wilkinson advised that the Department most likely to address this recommendation is Development Services, of which Housing and Community Development is a part. She would reach out to Development Services for feedback on its feasibility.

The next incentive was modification of impact fee requirements, including the reduction or waiver of these fees. These may include tax increment financing (TIF) funds, which are collected by the City's Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), as well as payments in lieu and other sources deposited into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Another consideration is the elimination or reduction of impact fees for qualified affordable housing projects.

Ms. Wilkinson noted that the City Commission has not yet determined whether or not the City's CRA will sunset in the near future or will be renewed. Its current sunset date is November 2025.

Mr. Newkirk expressed concern that the CRA may support the construction of luxury buildings. Commissioner Dr. Beasley-Pittman emphasized that those projects do not receive CRA funding, which is specifically earmarked for use to combat slum and blight. Ms. Wilkinson noted that the CRA may support mixed-income projects, although these are not luxury units. The CRA can contribute to projects that will be available to individuals and families earning up to 160% of area median income (AMI) as well as units that are affordable to individuals and families with lower incomes. Their focus is not on luxury units.

Ms. Wilkinson introduced CRA Housing and Economic Development Manager Bob Wojcik. Mr. Newkirk requested clarification of whether or not CRA funds are used toward the development of luxury housing. Mr. Wojcik explained that while one of the earliest buildings developed on Sistrunk Boulevard may be considered luxury, there are several other buildings being developed in that area which offer 100% affordable housing for individuals and families earning between 60% and 80% of AMI. Some of these projects are in very early stages.

Mr. Wojcik pointed out other buildings in the subject area which are affordable in differing ranges. He recalled that the first building to which Mr. Newkirk had referred can be rented to individuals and families earning no more than 140% of AMI. The CRA determined this level of affordability to be workforce housing.

Mr. Newkirk expressed concern that individuals living in the surrounding neighborhood cannot afford to live in the building to which he referred. Mr. Wojcik explained that the CRA's purview is not limited to affordable housing development only. The building in question was intended to bring a new project into the neighborhood which is similar to the recent development of Flagler Village.

Commissioner Dr. Beasley-Pittman added that one concern with City Commission District 3 was that the CRA not saturate the community with low-income housing only. The intent is to provide a variety of housing for individuals who want to live in that area. Mr. Wojcik noted that there are also projects in the CRA which are financed with tax credits.

Mr. Wojcik continued that when these affordable units become available, there is typically a lottery process to select applicants who would like to live there. They are not permitted to target a population from a specific geographical area, income, or race, but must ensure the process is open to all qualified applicants.

Ms. Wilkinson returned to the third incentive priority, which recommends reducing parking requirements to zero for affordable housing units where public transportation is available within one half-mile. Commissioner Dr. Beasley-Pittman expressed concern with this proposal, pointing out that access to public transportation is limited in some parts of the City; in addition, the residents of those developments may have difficulties walking a significant distance to transit stops. Some individuals may also have cars. She concluded that her concern was not with parking reductions, but with the proposed reduction to zero.

Mr. Condon advised that this incentive had been a top priority for him because the intent was not necessarily to suggest zero parking requirements for affordable units; instead, the intent was to provide the builder with the flexibility to provide zero parking for some units. The City's current parking requirement is for one parking space per each one-and-one-half bedrooms, which means a two-bedroom unit would require two spaces.

Mr. Condon continued that if a developer is allowed to propose a reduction as low as zero, this could provide an opportunity to expand the number of units they may build. The parking requirement could be zero, but the development may provide some parking.

Ms. Wilkinson emphasized that the proposed parking modification could be presented as an additional option for the developer. This could be explained to the City Commission during the joint meeting.

Chair Spragg asked if she will be responsible, as Chair, for introducing all three of the proposed incentives to the Commissioners for discussion. Ms. Wilkinson reviewed the joint meeting draft Agenda, noting that this document has not been finalized. It will include the following:

- Introduction of Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) members
- Clarification of the purpose of the joint meeting
- Explanation of the purpose of the Affordable Housing Incentive Plan
- Discussion of the three prioritized recommendations
- Direction provided by the City Commission regarding those recommendations
- Open discussion, remaining on the topic of affordable housing

Ms. Figueroa asked if it would be wise to refer to the City's population growth, as well as the growth associated with new projects such as the Convention Center and hotel, which could help the Commissioners understand the Committee's urgency in addressing the affordable housing crisis and bringing forward the three prioritized incentives. Chair Spragg observed that one of the incentives included in the Affordable Housing Incentive Plan is the creation of realistic goals for the number of new affordable housing units to be developed in Fort Lauderdale over the next three years.

Commissioner Dr. Beasley-Pittman asked if the Committee will provide the Commissioners with any handouts or other written materials. There was consensus to provide some type of visual reference materials to the Commission, even if it is only a single page. Ms. Figueroa concluded that she would prepare a page for this purpose.

With regard to the incentive addressing payment in lieu fees, Mr. Condon advised that the Committee review a memorandum he had received from the City Manager before addressing this topic. He pointed out that there are state laws which limit the application of payment in lieu fees unless the governing jurisdiction makes the developer whole. This may mean the City cannot require affordable units with or without a payment in lieu option without somehow offsetting the costs to the developer. Ms. Wilkinson stated that the City has already prepared an Ordinance to this effect, and advised that she would reach out to Urban Design and Planning for greater clarity. There were no plans at this time to replace this incentive with another.

Ms. Wilkinson also noted that while there may or may not be restrictions on impact fees, these would not affect payments in lieu, which are also included in the incentive. Chair

Spragg noted that payments in lieu are one of the sources that could be used to modify impact fees.

It was determined that Mr. Condon would provide additional input on the incentive related to parking requirement modifications at the joint meeting, and Mr. Degirolamo would provide additional information on the incentive addressing impact fees.

V. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING DATE – March 10, 2025

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 11:05 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.]