



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

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

Cumulative

AHAC Committee Members	2025 Attendance	Present	Absent
Susan Spragg, Chair	P	3	0
Shantel Jairam, Vice Chair	P	2	1
Commissioner Dr. Pamela Beasley-Pittman <i>(represented by Jamel Walker)</i>	P	3	0
William Condon	P	3	0
Rich Degirolamo (dep. 9:34)	P	3	0
Mindy Figueroa	A	2	1
Willie McKay	P	3	0
Roderick Newkirk <i>(1/25 absence excused)</i>	P	2	1
Agustina Sklar	P	2	0
Amanda Wilson	P	3	0

Staff

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

Also Present

Felicia Newkirk

Communication to the City Commission

None.

I. ROLL CALL / DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

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

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **February 10, 2025**

Chair Spragg noted the following changes:

- P.3, paragraph 4: add “potential” before “payment in lieu activity”
- P.4, paragraph 7: add “as part of the 11 required elements” after “the Affordable Housing Incentive Plan”

- P.8, paragraph 6: change two references to “impact fees” to “payment in lieu fees”

Motion made by Mr. Condon, seconded by Ms. Sklar, to approve [as amended]. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- **Affordable Housing Trust Fund Balance update**
 - \$783,250 Payback for Sailboat Bend
 - \$323,457 Proceeds from Sale of Commercial Property
 - \$34,465.02 Interest
 - \$1,141,171.02

Ms. Wilkinson reviewed the amounts listed above, clarifying that the Affordable Housing Trust Fund receives 15% of net proceeds from the sale of City-owned commercial properties.

Chair Spragg asked if the Committee members would receive an itemized report including details of the commercial property sold by the City. Ms. Wilkinson replied that this could be provided for informational purposes.

- **AHAC 2025 Workplan**

Chair Spragg noted that the members were provided with a 2025 workplan schedule. Ms. Wilkinson reviewed this schedule, which included the following:

- Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP) to be provided to the City Commission for approval on March 18, 2025 and submitted to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation in April
- Quarterly meetings between the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) and the City Commission
- Scheduling of guest speaker Sandra Einhorn at the May 12, 2025 meeting
- Address the Affordable Housing Incentive Plan from June through September, followed by a public hearing and inclusion on the City Commission Agenda for review; once accepted, the Incentive Plan will be sent to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation

Ms. Wilkinson advised that this schedule is flexible and can be modified if necessary. She encouraged the members to email her office with any additional recommendations for the 2025 timeline.

- **February 18, 2025 AHAC/Commissioner Joint Meeting – Chair**

Chair Spragg recalled that almost all the Committee members attended the AHAC’s joint meeting with the City Commission. She characterized the meeting as successful, noting

that it remained on track and included a good interchange with the Commissioners on the topics selected for discussion.

Chair Spragg continued that the day after the joint meeting, she met with Acting City Manager Susan Grant. They discussed payment in lieu projections, including the difficulty in assembling and updating this information. Ms. Grant indicated that she would circulate the Chair's information on this topic with her staff and determine who would be able to help with or take over its collection. Other items included forecasting, surplus properties, establishing measurable goals for affordable housing, a possible tourist tax, and other ideas.

Vice Chair Jairam asked if the Committee will meet with the incoming City Manager. Chair Spragg replied that this may be an option after the new City Manager has had some time to adjust to her new position.

Mr. Newkirk asked if pricing information is available for new affordable units on Sistrunk Boulevard. Ms. Wilkinson explained that this project is handled by the City's Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), which may have the requested information.

Mr. Newkirk expressed concern that some of the City's newer affordable units may not actually be affordable, particularly due to the effects of inflation on the rental market. Ms. Wilkinson stated that rent for affordable units should not exceed 30% of the renting household's income. The City uses income limits provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP), which are based on the total number of individuals in the household as well as income.

Ms. Wilkinson cautioned that municipalities have no jurisdiction over market rates; however, if a municipality contributes to a project, they may ask that developer to guarantee a percentage of affordable units. The price of these units may range from extremely low incomes up to 100% of area median income (AMI). The City's payment in lieu program allows developers who do not want to construct a percentage of affordable units to pay a fee in lieu of providing those units. Most affordable units are administered through Housing and Community Development, which provides funds to Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) for the provision of affordable units.

Mr. Degirolamo suggested that the Committee members be provided with a chart showing different levels of affordability based on incomes. Ms. Wilkinson advised that she has sent these documents to members in the past and would re-send them.

Chair Spragg noted that Broward County's AMI is \$88,500. Most affordable units being built are rented at between 80% and 140% of this AMI; only a very few units are rented at 50% or less of AMI. Ms. Wilkinson pointed out that these income levels are based in part on household size and may range from one to eight people.

Ms. Sklar asked if any projects are being proposed which would provide units for households earning 50% or less of AMI. She pointed out that there are very few units available for households with jobs in, for example, the tourism or hospitality industries. Mr. Degirolamo noted that it is very difficult to subsidize housing at the level of a very large affordable project.

Ms. Wilkinson stated that the Affordable Housing Trust Fund may be used in creative ways to provide gap financing for developers. This would help ensure the construction of affordable units. She reiterated that at present, however, the only organizations that can receive City funding are CHDOs, which typically do not have a great many units.

Vice Chair Jairam pointed out that market-rate rents are currently decreasing in Florida, although they are not considered affordable. Ms. Sklar confirmed this, adding that the decrease is primarily due to a stalled economy. Mr. Degirolamo commented that the market itself is never going to create affordable housing at the levels necessary to subsidize households with very low incomes.

Mr. Degirolamo left the meeting at 9:34 a.m.

Mr. Newkirk reiterated his concern that no truly affordable housing has been constructed in Fort Lauderdale in some time, and that most new construction consists of market-rate units. Vice Chair Jairam noted that operations and construction costs are still very high, and developers must find a way to pay for these costs in order to provide affordable units. Most older buildings have already paid off these costs. Ms. Wilkinson again cited a need for gap financing that would allow developers to maintain units at below-market rates for households earning low incomes.

Vice Chair Jairam asked if there is a list of Fort Lauderdale projects providing units at 50% of AMI or below. Ms. Walker advised that the CRA may be a source for this information. Ms. Wilkinson offered the examples of a Habitat for Humanity project that is 100% affordable, as well as other projects that are providing a small number of affordable units in market-rate developments. She also noted specific CHDOs that are receiving funding for the provision or maintenance of affordable units on a small scale, although not all organizations wish to maintain affordable units in perpetuity. She concluded that most developers choose to make a payment in lieu rather than construct affordable units.

Ms. Wilson characterized the City as evolving as it grows, and cautioned that households that cannot afford to live there will ultimately move elsewhere.

- **Draft Affordable Housing Trust Fund Policy**

Chair Spragg advised that she has worked with Ms. Wilkinson on the draft document establishing policies and procedures for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Ms.

Wilkinson confirmed that the document sent to the Committee members includes the Chair's recommended revisions.

Ms. Wilkinson recommended that all members submit their comments in written form to ensure they are accurately reflected when the document is updated. These comments can be made on the most recent draft document.

Chair Spragg reviewed the changes she proposed to the draft policies and procedures, which included:

- Reference to both production and preservation of affordable housing
- Combine terms of participation with a loan participation agreement
- Listing of revenues that come into the Trust Fund
- Section on reporting
- Breakdown of income levels for affordable housing
- Review of eligible uses
- Possible use of payment in lieu funds toward new construction rather than toward rental assistance or rehabilitation
- Use of the Trust Fund as a funding source for emergency housing related to natural disasters or pandemics after all other sources have been exhausted
- Establishing award preferences for households in which a member is disabled, public employees, or elderly; consider adding veterans to this list
- Recipients of funding must submit progress reports upon request
- Allowing for amendment of these policies
- Allowing relief from utility connection fees as a use

Chair Spragg advised that the Trust Fund policy ties into some of the strategies included in the LHAP, which will go before the City Commission at their March 18, 2025 meeting. She briefly reviewed other options as well, such as using Trust Fund dollars to fund an affordable housing market study and/or Affordable Housing Master Plan for Fort Lauderdale.

The members also briefly discussed the SHIP income limit and rental rate information listed in documentation provided to them by Ms. Wilkinson, noting that market rates remain high and that most of the units being built in Fort Lauderdale are market-rate. Ms. Wilkinson explained that the document listed income levels from 30% through 140% of Broward County AMI, which is determined by SHIP to be \$89,100. It also includes rental rates that could be afforded by these income levels: for example, an individual earning at or below 30% of AMI would be able to pay approximately \$595 in rent, according to SHIP calculations. She acknowledged that the definition of affordable housing and actual affordability are two different considerations.

Mr. Condon noted that the SHIP documentation lists both 81% to 140% and 120% to 140% of AMI as the income levels associated with workforce housing. Ms. Wilkinson advised that the Committee may choose which of these ranges to associate with

workforce housing in the Trust Fund policy. It was clarified that there can be some overlap of the moderate and workforce categories within this range, which would make the income range for workforce housing between 81% and 140% of AMI.

Chair Spragg requested more information on the prospective use of Trust Fund dollars as a funding source for emergency housing related to natural disasters or pandemics. Ms. Wilkinson recommended expanding this definition to allow greater flexibility in providing rental assistance to households with emergency needs that do not fit into other categories. This would allow the policy to address needs that are not specifically listed in the LHAP.

Ms. Wilkinson added that the Committee may also wish to more clearly define the emergency situations for which Trust Fund dollars could be used. Chair Spragg encouraged the Committee members to email their thoughts on these definitions to Ms. Wilkinson's office.

Chair Spragg returned to the issue of natural disasters or pandemics, asking if it would be acceptable to provide funds for these situations once all other funding sources have been exhausted. Ms. Wilkinson confirmed that this could be included.

Chair Spragg continued that the draft policy states a higher value would be placed on projects that focus on the needs of households earning 30% to 50% of AMI. She characterized this as an aspirational goal, as it is unlikely that the City will see a great many of these projects. Ms. Wilkinson advised that CHDOs would be the only organizations bringing forward those types of projects.

Chair Spragg also recalled that there had been previous discussion of making sure all affordable housing in Fort Lauderdale is not concentrated in a single area or district, but is distributed throughout the City. She asked if this could be made a selection criterion for use of Trust Fund dollars. Ms. Wilkinson noted that more mixed-use projects are coming forward, which combine residential with commercial uses as well as a range of income levels in some cases. It was determined that Ms. Sklar would draft language related to the distribution of affordable housing throughout the City and send it to Ms. Wilkinson's office for review.

Ms. Wilkinson requested that all the Committee members send her their written comments on the draft policy by the beginning of April 2025. She would consolidate the comments and send the document back to the members.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- **Scheduled Speakers for upcoming meetings**

It was noted that future speakers were previously discussed.

Chair Spragg advised that the Florida Housing Conference is scheduled for August 25-27, 2025. Ms. Wilkinson recalled that in 2024, the City paid for two Committee members to attend this conference, and the Chair and Vice Chair also attended, paying their own way. The City will fund travel, food, and hotel expenses for two members to attend in 2025. She would send information on the conference to the members.

Chair Spragg explained that members attending the conference would be asked to take notes and report back to the Committee on what they saw at the conference. Ms. Wilkinson encouraged members who have not previously attended the conference to consider going; if two new participants did not wish to go, Chair Spragg advised that she would like to attend again.

Ms. Sklar stated that March 10, 2025 is a National Day of Action by the National Low-Income Housing Coalition, as significant funding cuts are expected for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). She encouraged the members to reach out to their elected officials and encourage them to save these funds at both the federal and state levels.

Ms. Sklar also noted that a virtual housing workshop to review the Broward County Master Plan is scheduled for Wednesday, March 12, 2025.

V. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING DATE – April 14, 2025

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 10:57 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.]