

Motion made by Chair Condon, seconded by Ms. Lecuyer, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

4. Updates from Chair, General Discussion and Comments by Committee Members

Chair Condon advised that Andres DeFelice, representing affordable housing developer Green Mills Group, would give a presentation later in the meeting. He noted that Mr. DeFelice was provided with a list of questions submitted by the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) members in advance of today's meeting.

5. Old Business

I. Status of Affordable Housing Trust Fund Balance & detail report

Ms. Williams reported that the amount available in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund is \$1,260,533.50. She reviewed the documentation provided from the City's Finance Department, which has requested that the Committee focus on actuals. \$600,000 has been committed by the City Commission to an entity seeking local matching funds. Several additional projects have been funded with approval by the Committee and/or the City Commission. She concluded that when funds that have been committed are removed, the remaining balance will be just over \$900,000.

II. Discussion of 2026 Incentives

1. Selection/vote on 2-3 focused incentives for 2026 Incentive Report

Chair Condon recalled that the members had previously discussed identifying two to three incentives on which to focus within the 2026 Affordable Housing Incentives Report. Some of the 11 incentives listed in this document have been presented to the City Commission and the state multiple times, while others have already been implemented. He suggested that one item of focus should be accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and requested direction from the members regarding the other incentives.

The Committee members discussed the incentives, including the printed inventory of public lands suitable for the development of affordable housing. Ms. Williams advised that this list can be provided for review at next month's meeting. Chair Condon noted that many of these City-owned lots are not developable due to size, utility issues, or other concerns. The most recent list was compiled in 2023.

Mr. Adams commented that affordability should be based on renters' income rather than area median income (AMI), which is the current measurement of affordability. Ms. Mammano suggested that the Committee may wish to advise the state that offering affordability incentives to properties that rent or sell at 120% of AMI does not meet affordable housing needs, and to recommend lowering that percentage. Chair Condon

commented that Florida's Live Local Act is an example of legislation that provides bonuses for affordability up to 120% of AMI, which is effectively market rate housing.

Mr. Adams noted that there are very few incentives offered for the development of affordable housing for households earning less than 100% of AMI, and pointed out that the AMI in Broward County is approximately \$96,000, while renters earn considerably lower incomes.

Ms. Mammano offered to address ADUs with the intent of proposing the addition of affordability requirements if the development of these units is promoted. Mr. Adams and Ms. Sklar suggested working together in a subcommittee format to refine language addressing the range of affordability in order to include lower percentages. Chair Condon advised that the Committee would discuss the possibility of creating subcommittees later in the meeting.

Ms. Mammano requested a presentation regarding flexible lot configurations and zero lot lines, and suggested that the Committee consider adding this as a third area of focus in the future.

6. New Business

III. Welcome new AHAC Member

1. Dr. Rebecca Howell

IV. Status of Affordable Housing Tracking Report

1. Neighborly Asset Tracking Module

This Item was postponed to the next meeting.

V. Guest Speaker

1. Andres DeFelice, Green Mills Group

Andres DeFelice, Senior Development Manager with Green Mills Group, provided an overview of the company's history as well as a review of its current developments within Fort Lauderdale. Green Mills Group is a Broward-based developer founded in 2011 which focuses solely on the development of affordable housing in the state of Florida. Their philosophy emphasizes quality over quantity. They complete between one and three developments per year, with one-third of projects being senior developments. Another one-third of developments are in collaboration with nonprofits, while the final third is supportive housing developments.

Mr. DeFelice addressed the Seven on 7th project in Fort Lauderdale, which was developed by Green Mills Group. A development agreement for this project was solidified in 2018 with the Broward Partnership for the Homeless. The project included rezoning of the parking lot area of the City's Central Homeless Assistance Center. The development was completed in late 2023.

Mr. DeFelice noted that the process of seeking tax credits can be lengthy, as most developers do not receive these credits upon their first request. He estimated that it can take three to five years for these credits to be awarded, work to be completed, and the property to be stabilized and leased. Funding commitments also included donations and allocations from various state and local entities.

Mr. DeFelice reviewed rents within the project, noting that the maximum rent is \$1,210, while net projected rent is \$400. This is because 50% of the units are reserved for households that are formerly homeless or at risk of homelessness. The development team underwrites rentals for units leased to homeless individuals and seeks additional support from Broward County in the form of vouchers to help the households and individuals renting extremely low-income units. This allows the property to continue to be able to pay for maintenance and capital expenditures in the future.

Ms. Mammano asked if land was provided for the Seven on 7th property. Mr. DeFelice replied that free land was not contributed in this case. The parking lot on which the project was developed belonged to Broward County and was deeded to the Broward Partnership for the Homeless, and Green Mills Group paid the Partnership a capitalized ground lease payment of \$1 million to \$1.5 million upon closing. Mr. DeFelice estimated that the total cost of the development was \$28 million, of which construction was \$17.2 million.

Mr. DeFelice emphasized that low-income housing tax credits are the primary source of equity for affordable housing developers. Applicants apply to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation for these credits through competitive funding rounds. They receive tax credits that are sold to limited partners or investors for cents on the dollar: for example, current tax credit equity pricing in Fort Lauderdale is roughly 86 cents on the dollar. Most investors are large banks which write these investments off their taxes and expect to be bought out at the end of 15 years.

The equity continues to be sold in tranches throughout the construction phase of the project, with final equity coming when the project is stabilized and cost certifications are complete. The federal subsidy is administered by a state entity, which in Florida is the Florida Housing Finance Corporation.

Mr. DeFelice noted that affordable development does not happen often due to the level of competition for the tax credits. He characterized the need as insurmountable, as there is not enough funding available to keep up with the demand for affordable

housing. Fort Lauderdale is one of the highest-contributing municipalities in Broward County with respect to funding for affordable housing.

Ms. Mammano asked for clarification of where tax credits are generated. Mr. DeFelice explained that this process begins at the federal level with a determination of how many tax credits will be allocated to each state. This is determined by a formula based on the states' populations. A state entity then receives the tax credits. This entity may also have its own funding mechanisms within the state budget.

Tax credits may only be used to fund units that are 80% AMI or below. Mr. DeFelice noted that some developers create mixed-income projects that contain some market-rate or workforce housing units. The Florida Housing Finance Corporation has implemented a new funding application known as the Live Local Sale Application, which allows developers interested in larger mixed-income developments to apply. These are typically a 50/50 or 80/20 division between affordable and workforce housing. Workforce units in these developments are typically at 80% AMI in order to retain access to the tax credits.

Mr. DeFelice next addressed the Lofts on 6th project, also developed by Green Mills Group. This project arose from the introduction of the developer to the Pantry of Broward, which also wished to redevelop its parking lot. Additional measures included a successful unsolicited proposal on an adjacent piece of land owned by the City, as well as funding from the CRA for a Local Government Area of Opportunity (LGAO) loan, which increased the competitive profile of the tax credit application.

Ms. Mammano asked if the developments required zoning changes or were accomplished within existing zoning. Mr. DeFelice replied that the Seven on 7th project required rezoning to the Northwest Regional Activity Center (NWRAC) zoning district, noting that a sliver of property that was zoned commercially was administratively approved. He emphasized the progressive nature of the City in embracing the policies of the Live Local Act, including administrative zoning changes.

Mr. DeFelice continued that the Lofts on 6th project has a total development cost of \$45 million, which is significantly higher than the Seven on 7th project, due in part to the effects of inflation on construction costs. He noted that this project includes 9,000 sq. ft. of commercial space for the new headquarters of the Pantry of Broward, as well as mixed-use commercial development on the ground floor. A three-story parking garage is also part of the project, which significantly increases its cost.

The Lofts on 6th project received \$30 million in tax credit equity, which is roughly 67% of the developer's capital funding. The developer had 75% in tax credit equity for the Seven on 7th project, which shows the erosive effects of inflation. This results in the construction of fewer units and requests for more funds from local governments. Two loans have been combined into a single loan to lessen the interest rate.

All units in the Lofts on 6th project are one-bedroom. The development is reserved for use by seniors aged 62 or older. Rents are between 30% and 80% AMI and are based on 2025 maximum rents. The average AMI across all units is 60%.

Mr. DeFelice concluded that the Lofts on 6th project is expected to be complete by late summer 2027. Individuals who have expressed interest in living at the development are placed on an interest list. Income eligibility is certified by an affordable housing management firm. Residents' income would have to increase very substantially in order for their lease not to be renewed.

Commissioner Dr. Beasley-Pittman commented that in most cases, when a new development indicates they are ready to begin leasing, there is feedback from the community expressing concern that the public was not notified in time. She requested more information on the interest list. Mr. DeFelice replied that the interest list is not advertised during construction, as that phase is very lengthy. Pre-leasing begins when ads are placed in local newspapers. He emphasized that projects are advertised in the local community typically four to five months before construction is completed.

Mr. DeFelice continued that the interest list is randomized, and the property management firm will begin reaching out to the individuals on the list to begin the qualification process. There is no first come/first served basis for leasing of units due to the randomization.

Commissioner Dr. Beasley-Pittman strongly emphasized the importance of a community-first advertising/leasing process by which local residents can place their names on the list for consideration. Mr. DeFelice advised that he has an upcoming presentation to the Northwest Progresso-Flagler Heights Civic Association which will provide information to the community that the pre-leasing phase is coming.

Commissioner Dr. Beasley-Pittman also asked if Green Mills Group is reaching out to other neighborhood associations in the area in addition to Northwest Progresso-Flagler Heights. Mr. DeFelice confirmed that while the developer has not spoken with representatives of other associations thus far, this can be done. He noted that Pantry of Broward is helping spread the word of the new development.

It was asked how many affordable units are currently being constructed in the state of Florida. Mr. DeFelice replied that while he did not have a specific number, Fort Lauderdale has an existing affordable housing stock of between 500 and 1,000 units, with an estimated 250 to 500 additional affordable units in the pipeline. The Florida Housing Finance Corporation finances between 3,000 and 5,000 units annually across the state.

Mr. DeFelice addressed the questions sent to him in advance of today's meeting by the Committee members, including specific income eligibility tiers for the Lofts on 6th project. Eligible households of one will earn between \$24,000 and \$64,000, with an

income limit of between \$27,000 and \$73,000 for a household of two. Pantry of Broward will assist residents with monthly food packages and will provide additional resources related to SNAP benefits, health care and medication guidance, and benefits for grandparents with custody of minor children.

Regarding the Seven on 7th project, Mr. DeFelice advised that supportive housing developments have many additional requirements that must be met in addition to income restrictions. Other supportive environments include housing for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Green Mills Group has discussed the possibility of working on these types of projects with nonprofit entities.

Mr. DeFelice emphasized that Fort Lauderdale has been very progressive in its embrace of the Live Local Act in support of affordable housing, and has made funds available to spur affordable housing development in the City. The City has also brought developers' interest to certain parcels of land on which affordable housing may be developed. He characterized the permitting process as the most crucial element, suggesting that this process could be audited to identify efficiencies for affordable and workforce housing, as the City's permitting process can be difficult and lengthy.

Community Services Department Director Porshia Garcia advised that the Development Services Department provides permit concierge service, provided by business assistance coordinators who serve as a single point of contact for permit applicants. As permits move through various reviews, the coordinator handles these interactions for the applicant, which leads to a more streamlined experience. Affordable housing projects are identified and expedited through this process.

Ms. Garcia continued that once a plan reviewer enters a comment into the system, the applicant is immediately notified by email. She added that a permit cannot be issued until payment has been received for it. Once the client has replied and adjustments are made, re-review occurs the following business day. The City also has a permit solutions team consisting of two business assistance coordinators and an administrative assistant.

Mr. DeFelice noted that the Lofts on 6th project did not have access to permit concierge service until their project was already underway, and requested more information on how this program was being shared with the community. He also noted that the City's permitting fees are perceived as high, particularly in addition to the costs of private providers also used by developers.

Ms. Mammano observed that the Committee may wish to consider ways to improve or add incentives for affordable developers. Mr. DeFelice suggested creating an advisory group of local affordable developers which could meet with City Staff and discuss permitting procedures.

Mr. DeFelice continued that because Green Mills Group often requires gap subsidies from local governments, they often include a requirement for the hiring of minority-owned and/or local contractors. He estimated that 50% of their developments include this requirement, including both Seven on 7th and Lofts on 6th.

Mr. DeFelice advised that for Green Mills Group's affordable housing developments, AMI will always fall within the 30% to 80% range, with an average of 60% across all units. This is part of the dynamic within the group's funding applications. They will continue to focus on affordable housing, but are evaluating opportunities to develop workforce housing as well. He defined workforce housing as housing for households with incomes between 80% and 140% of AMI, but noted that even this range can be difficult to construct without subsidies.

Information on state, federal, and local funds available to affordable developers can be found on FloridaHousing.org as well as the 2024 Annual Report from the Florida Housing Finance Corporation. He reviewed tax credit subsidies at different levels in addition to other funding and grant opportunities at all levels. Funds available within Fort Lauderdale and Broward County include CRA and Housing and Community Development (HCD) dollars, which provide financial support to both affordable and workforce housing.

The Florida Housing Finance Corporation does not require a minimum square footage per unit, although local governments may have unit size requirements. Mr. DeFelice estimated that Green Mills Group's studios are typically 400 to 500 sq. ft., pointing out that all units must be compliant with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). One-bedroom units are 600 to 650 sq. ft., while two-bedroom units are 800 to 900 sq. ft.

Mr. DeFelice addressed a question related to Broward County's Geller Act, stating that he found this to be a helpful policy which hopefully incentivizes the construction of affordable housing. It also provides for funding contributions to Broward County's Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Concerns include the fee chart, which does not include fees that incentivize market-rate developers to build affordable units. The amendment only applies to certain areas of Broward County which are located on arterial roadways, in proximity to rail stations, or inside RACs, all of which are likely to be built out already. Local governments may opt out of the policy.

Mr. DeFelice continued that if a commercially zoned property seeks administrative approval under the Geller Act, there is a mixed-use requirement, which is often cost-prohibitive. A tax credit community would need to find additional subsidies to fund a commercial element for mixed use.

Mr. DeFelice advised that data was not available on the dollars raised in Fort Lauderdale as a result of the Geller Act, noting that he was unsure of whether or not this

policy has been fully implemented. Ms. Williams clarified that the fees collected in Fort Lauderdale are divided between the City and Broward County.

Amanda Hatter, Planner, explained that the City has begun discussions with software provider Neighborly to determine the best way to track assets from projects that receive incentives at the City, County, state, or federal level. Information on properties that have received Geller Act subsidies, bonus densities, or other City incentives is also tracked by the Planning Department.

Mr. DeFelice advised that there has been a significant increase in the supply of rental housing in the City, including market-rate, workforce, and affordable units; however, market studies show there is still a strong demand for affordable units. He noted that rents are beginning to soften over the last year, with some market-rate developments offering rent concessions.

Ms. Mammano expressed concern that flooding the market with units does not seem to help reduce rents in the absence of a recession, as there are often individuals from outside the community who are willing to pay the prices required. Mr. Degirolamo observed that if policy allows density to continue to increase, the market will typically stop itself. Mr. Adams noted that another potential incentive could be providing some level of significant tax relief for affordable housing projects.

VI. Status of ADU Action Plan and Map

This Item was deferred to the next meeting.

VII. Discussion on AHAC Subcommittees

Chair Condon asked if, should subcommittees be permitted, they could be held via Zoom. Ms. Williams replied that subcommittee meetings must be advertised as regular public meetings. She would reach out to the City Attorney's Office for additional clarification.

VIII. Future Speakers

- 1. Broward County Property Appraiser's Office**
- 2. Broward County AHAC**
- 3. Fort Lauderdale Chambers of Commerce**
- 4. Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance/Workforce Housing**

Ms. Carter confirmed that the next scheduled presentation will be from a member of the Broward County Property Appraiser's Office.

7. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

Chair Condon advised that Ms. Hatter's presentations on the Neighborly software system and the ADU map would be deferred to the May 2026 meeting. He added that there will also be further discussion of how to proceed by focusing on three to four specific incentives.

8. Good of the order

None.

9. Public Comments

None.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING DATE: May 11, 2026

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 11:02 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.]