

ESCAMBIA-PENSACOLA AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

October 03, 2023

The Escambia-Pensacola Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) held a regularly scheduled monthly meeting in the Vince Whibbs Conference Room of Pensacola City Hall, 222 West Main Street, Pensacola, Florida on October 03, 2023 at 9:00 AM.

Committee members present: Ed Brown, Laura Gilmore, Lauren Green, County Commissioner Lumon May, Deborah Mays, Paul Ritz, Crystal Scott, City Councilman Delarian Wiggins (virtual)

Committee members absent: Brenton Goodman, Maya Moss

Staff members present: Meredith Reeves, Interim Director of City of Pensacola Housing Department; Tracy Pickens, City of Pensacola Housing Department; and Garrett Griffin, Escambia County Neighborhood Enterprise Division Manager; Tim Evans, Escambia County Neighborhood Enterprise Division Program Manager; Clara Long, Escambia County Neighborhood and Human Services Department Director

Call to Order, Welcome, and Roll Call

Chairwoman Crystal Scott called the meeting to order at 9:03 am recognizing that the meeting was without sufficient attendance to establish a quorum. She asked that all members and staff in attendance introduce themselves. Lauren Green, a new member appointed by the County gave a brief background on her interest in joining the work of the committee. Proof of publication was noted by the City and County staff.

About this time Commissioner May arrived, which then constituted a quorum. Technical issues were also resolved which allowed Councilman Wiggins to join the meeting virtually.

The Chair stated that those absent (Goodman and Moss) had informed staff of a conflict and so asked for a motion to approve the absence as excused. This motion was made by Paul Ritz and seconded by Ed Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Minutes from the previous month's meeting were then reviewed by the Committee and a motion was made by Laura Gilmore to approve them as written. Ed Brown seconded this motion, and it was then passed unanimously.

Old Business

The Old Business regarded filling the vacant AHAC positions. Garrett Griffin stated that the County Commission had approved the application of Lauren Green for membership on the AHAC. Meredith Reeves stated that the City Council will confirm the County's appointment at the next Council meeting.

The Chair raised an item of Old Business not on the agenda, asking about the City's policy regarding identifying property 'suitable for affordable housing'. Much discussion followed regarding the newly established requirements and 'recommendations' of the Live Local Act (SB 102 (2023)). Garrett Griffin confirmed that the County had published all the Live Local required and suggested postings (parcels

available, method of determining suitability, and process for having County property declared surplus) on the County's website. He also confirmed that any parcel which is determined suitable for affordable housing which is sold, the proceeds will go into the County Affordable Housing Trust Fund. More discussion followed regarding the local impacts of the Live Local Act on zoning, density and the area's Land Use Plans (City's and County's).

After some discussion Meredith Reeves interrupted to bring the Committee back to the agenda item of the City and County Incentive Plan review. She stated that although the discussion being had is valuable for understanding the changes made by the recent legislation, the longstanding legislation which established the AHAC and the SHIP Program had a single requirement which must be met annually, which was the review of the Incentive Plans.

New Business

The Chair then moved to the New Business on the Agenda, however requested that the County begin the review rather than the City.

Garett Griffin began the review with...

Incentive A: The process of approvals of development orders or permits, as defined in S. 163.3164(7) and (8), for affordable housing projects is expedited to a greater degree than other projects.

Garett stated that the County's permitting process is very quick for all development orders, usually only two or three days, so there is no change recommended to the County's process.

Meredith acknowledged that the City's process had been much more time consuming than the County's in previous years, however the City did a major overhaul of the development process in late 2022 and it has made a substantial difference in the time factor in projects within the City limits.

Incentive B: The modification of impact fee requirements, including reduction of or waiver of fees and alternative methods of fee payment for affordable housing.

Neither the County nor the City collect impact fees for development, so there is no change to the current recommendation.

Incentive C: The allowance of flexibility in density levels for affordable housing.

The Live Local Act's implementation will require a review and amendment to the County's Land Development Code.

As the City currently utilizes 'cumulative zoning' approach, there is somewhat less impact from Live Local to the City's processes.

Incentive D: The reservation of infrastructure capacity for housing for very low income persons, low income persons and moderate income persons.

Both the City and the County stated that there is sufficient infrastructure capacity for all current and anticipated development. Tim Evans (Escambia County) stated that the State as well as the Federal governments have recently included the issue of broadband connectivity in the discussion of a community's infrastructure. He further stated that the County is currently focused on a multi-million dollar program to extend high-speed broadband into the rural areas of the County.

Incentive E: The allowance for affordable accessory residential units (ADUs) in residential zoning districts.

Since both the City and the County already allow ADUs in residentially zoned areas, there is no need to address the specifics of the zoning issue. However a question was brought up regarding the size restrictions of such ADUs.

Discussion followed regarding 'Appendix Q' of the State building code which allows for extremely small homes as permanent structures. The City stated that the Council has voted to adopt Appendix Q within their development codes.

Commissioner May stated that while the County has not accepted Appendix Q, his recommendation was to determine the neighborhoods or areas within the County where such units would be acceptable and fit the community design vernacular.

Laura Gilmore asked whether the first step in the County's developing acceptance of the Appendix Q design might be to allow such units as ADUs, since they are currently allowed. She made the motion that the AHAC recommend that the County accept Appendix Q only for ADU design availability. Deborah Mays seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Incentive F: The Reduction of parking and setback requirements for Affordable Housing.

The Committee has no recommendation for any change to either City or County policy with regard to this Incentive.

Incentive G: The allowance of flexible lot configurations including zero-lot-line configurations.

The Committee supports the current recommendation (County LDC allows, City requires request for variance to code depending on zoning) asking for the City to provide clarification as to the process in seeking variance.

Incentive H: The modification of street requirements for affordable housing.

The Committee has no changes to recommend to either the City or the County with regard to this incentive.

Incentive I: The establishment of a process by which a local government considers, before adoption. policies, procedures, ordinances, regulations, or plan provisions that increase the cost of housing.

The Committee has no recommendation for any change to either City or County policy with regard to this Incentive.

Incentive J: The preparation of a printed inventory of locally owned public lands suitable for affordable housing development.

Both the County and the City confirm that they comply with the requirements and recommendations of the State's Live Local Act with regard to this Incentive.

Discussion followed regarding the value of a list which is updated only every three years, given that the governmental entities receive a number of properties annually. The Committee felt that more up-to-date information would be more supportive of affordable housing development. Ed Brown made a motion that the entities both consider making updates to the publicly posted available property lists annually. The motion was seconded by Laura Gilmore and passed unanimously.

Incentive K: The support of development near transportation hubs and major employment centers and mixed-use developments.

The Committee has no recommendation for any change to either City or County policy with regard to this Incentive.

Following the review of the final statutory incentive the Committee discussed the possibility of adding additional recommendations to the list for the City and the County. While there was considerable discussion, and a motion to the topic was made, the motion never received a second, and by this time the Committee attendance had dropped so as to lose standing as a quorum, so no further formal action was possible.

Public Comment

Leslie Yandle from JUST Pensacola provided public comments.

Announcements

The next meeting will take place November 7, 2023 at in the Vince Whibbs Conference Room at City Hall. The AHAC Meeting will be preceded by a public hearing to fully approve the City's and County's Incentive Plans for presentation to the respective Governmental entities at a December meeting of the respective governing bodies, and then forward the Plans to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation and the Florida Housing Commission by the year's end.

Garett mentioned that he would seek to secure one of the County's Attorney staff members to make a presentation on the Florida Sunshine Law for either the December or January meeting.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Chair Crystal Scott adjourned the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

Submitted by Timothy Evans