

# **ESCAMBIA-PENSACOLA AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

**October 27, 2021**

A regular meeting of the Escambia-Pensacola Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) was held in the Hagler Mason Conference Room 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor City Hall, 420 W. Chase Street, Pensacola, Florida on October 27, 2021 at 9:00 AM.

*Committee members present:* Renee Wilhoit, Crystal Scott, John Ralls, Ed Brown, Paul Ritz, Laura Gilmore and Council Vice President Ann Hill

*Committee members absent:* Lumon May, Escambia County Commissioner, Justin Williams, Heidi Palmquist, and Cecily Chundriek

*Guests present:* Melissa Crews, Escambia County Neighborhood Enterprise Division (NED, Tim Evans, Escambia County NED, Clara Long, NHS Department, Escambia County; Audrey Washington, Escambia County District 3 Commissioner's Aide, Christine Crespo, City of Pensacola Housing Department

*Staff members present:* Meredith Reeves, Neighborhood Enterprise Division Manager, Neighborhood and Human Services Department, Escambia County; Marcie Whitaker, Housing Director, Pensacola Housing Department; Tracy Pickens, Pensacola Housing Department; Demetrius Pettway, Pensacola Housing Department

1. **Call to Order and Welcome and Roll Call:**  
Chair Crystal Scott called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. She proceeded with the introductory roll call of members present, after which she acknowledged that there was a quorum established.
2. **Proof of Publication:**  
Notice of the meeting was published in the *Pensacola News Journal*. Notice of the meeting was also published on the City & County respective websites.
3. **Board Minutes:**  
Crystal Scott asked if all present members reviewed the minutes of the October 5, 2021 meeting. There was a motion by Paul Ritz to accept minutes as written. Council Vice President Ann Hill seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
4. **County and City Affordable Housing Incentive Plan Report Overview:**  
Crystal Scott stated that committee had finished up with continuation of reviewing incentives as of last month's meeting. Crystal then opens floor for any further discussion related to the draft of the City of Pensacola's Affordable Housing Incentive Plan Review, provided with the meeting materials. Council Vice President Ann Hill stated she may have additional question as it relates to additions to current incentives. The Chair suggested that such suggestions would be addressed in a following item on the day's agenda.
5. **Old Business:**  
City Lien Release Policy:  
Chair Crystal Scott opens the floor for discussion on the Lien Release Policy for Affordable Housing Infill Projects, which was included with the materials for the meeting. Ms. Scott then asked whether a similar policy exists with the county. Meredith Reeves replies the County has a

general lien forgiveness policy where an applicant can request the forgiveness of a lien, but it is not specific to affordable housing, and forgiveness is at the county administrator's discretion. Ms. Reeves states that general practice is for the Administrator to release soft costs within the lien, but to retain hard costs. She also stated that the person who owned the property when the lien was levied will generally not receive any release of fees.

A Discussion followed as to whether there should be a revision of the County's lien policy to match with the City's policy as it relates directly to affordable housing.

Council Vice President Ann Hill proposed possible revisions to the City's Lien Release Policy. First, to edit the text of the policy in some places, recognizing some specific references it contains are well out of date. Ms. Hill also recommended the addition of 'income-qualified owner-occupant buyers' to the list of those who may make a request for release of the lien. Marcie Whitaker said she would address the necessary updating edits to the document and circulate to the committee. Substantive changes to the policy would require Council action.

#### County Policy for Surplus Property Disposition:

Chair Crystal Scott opened the floor for discussion. Paul Ritz asked Meredith Reeves to provide an overview of the document and its purpose. Ms. Reeves responded with a summary of the policy. Ms. Scott made a request for that surplus list be reviewed quarterly as opposed to annually. Meredith Reeves advises there currently may be too many properties on the list to make quarterly review feasible at this time. Ed Brown made a motion that the county proposed Affordable Housing Incentive Plan's Surplus Property Disposition be updated for currency. Ann Hill seconded motion. Crystal Scott suggested a motion to amend Mr. Brown's motion to include a process for review of Incentive J to include an identifiable process a citizen or organization could follow in accessing available surplus property from the county. Laura Gilmore seconded the motion to amend the original motion. The motion to amend was passed by vote of the members present, as was the amended motion originally made by Mr. Brown.

John Ralls made a motion to explore creation of incentives for mobile homes, tiny homes, modular homes, and other non 'stick-built' styles of housing. Laura Gilmore second motion. Following some discussion it was decided that the 'exploration' of the issue did not require formal action. It was also acknowledged that such housing was restricted in some areas by land use code and zoning, and that the issue was more complex that it might initially appear.

#### **6. New Business:**

Council Vice President Ann Hill discussed the possible use of developers' impact fees for creating affordable housing within the city and county. Marcie Whitaker explained the State such a program which is used to fund the State Housing Initiative Program (SHIP) known as Doc Stamp Tax. Ms. Hill stated that there have been years when the State legislature has redirected the SHIP funds to other budget lines. She said having something similar but local would allow local control of any such funds. Ms. Whitaker stated that she was aware of some municipalities within the State that have instituted such fees or taxes to support local affordable housing.

- 7. PUBLIC COMMENT:** A citizen present for the meeting expressed frustration as to why the 27 'buildable' parcels of the list 100 surplus properties have not been utilized as yet. Clara Long responded stating that the county is doing a robust infill house program to get those properties developed for more available affordable housing. She referenced a current project with a local affordable housing developer utilizing five lots donated by the County.

8. **ANNOUNCEMENT/WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:** Tim Evans notified members that application for the 2022 AHAC committee are now available. The next AHAC meeting is scheduled for November 9, 2021, to be followed by a Public Hearing for proposed initiatives on November 16, 2021

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business or discussion, the meeting adjourned at 10:19 AM

*Pending Approval*

Respectfully submitted by: Demetrius M. Pettway