

ESCAMBIA-PENSACOLA AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING

December 07, 2021

The Escambia-Pensacola Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) held a regularly scheduled meeting in the Hagler-Mason Conference Room, 2nd Floor of Pensacola City Hall, 222 West Main Street, Pensacola, Florida on December 07, 2021 at 9:00 AM.

Committee members present: Laura Gilmore, Pensacola City Council President Ann Hill, Escambia County Commissioner Lumon May, Paul Ritz, Crystal Scott, and Renee Wilhoit

Committee members absent: Ed Brown, Cecily Chundriek, Heidi Palmquist, John Ralls, and Justin Williams

Staff members present: Timothy Evans, Neighborhood Enterprise Division (NED), Escambia County; Melissa Crews, NED Escambia County; Marcie Whitaker, City of Pensacola Housing Director; Tracy Pickens, City of Pensacola Housing

Call to Order, Welcome, and Roll Call

Chair Crystal Scott called the meeting to order at 9:02 am. She proceeded with the introductory roll call of members present, after which she acknowledged that there was a quorum established.

Proof of Publication

Notice of the meeting was published in the *Escambia Sun Press*. Notice of the meeting was also published on the City & County respective websites.

Discussion Topics

Linkage Fees – Marcie Whitaker reported on the research she had undertaken on the issue of ‘linkage fees’ which have been utilized in other communities across the state to develop an income stream to fund a local affordable housing trust fund. The fees were derived from the development of office, commercial and industrial real estate. In the communities which have established these fees, the funds support workforce level housing development for anticipated employees of the new or expanding businesses facing the levy. Ms. Whitaker said that the first step in advancing such a local effort would be a complex and expensive NEXUS study of market conditions. One member questioned whether such a fee on new or expanding business/industry might be detrimental to current economic development efforts. Following brief discussion it was decided that an initial step would be to communicate with the area Chamber of Commerce to inquire into the status of the new business development pipeline.

AHAC Membership – Tim Evans stated that the term of service for most all committee members will end at the end of the month. The two local elected government representatives’ terms are the only members whose terms will continue. The City of Pensacola has two seats to appoint in addition to the elected member, and the action item is on the Council agenda for the meeting scheduled for December 16th. The Escambia County Commission appoints up to seven members to the committee, in addition to the elected representative. There have been 12 individuals to submit applications for these positions. The Board of County Commissioners will appoint

between four and seven individuals from the applicants at their meeting scheduled for January 06, 2022. This is to be in compliance with Florida statutory requirements.

Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP) – Marcie Whitaker introduced the printed document of ‘housing strategies’ which had been distributed at the beginning of the meeting. She stated that the strategies are an essential component of the Local Housing Assistance Plan, which is a three year planning document produced by the local housing partnership (Escambia County and the City of Pensacola) outlining and prioritizing the expenditure of the area’s annual allocation of State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) funds from the State’s Sadowsky Housing Trust Fund. A new three-year plan is due to be submitted to Tallahassee this spring. Ms. Whitaker recommended that the AHAC consider developing an understanding of the current strategies without necessarily suggesting significant changes to the plan for the current cycle. Once the LHAP is submitted the committee might wish to make deeper inquiries into some specific strategies for reconsideration in the next cycle for LHAP submission. She recommended that the Committee consider adding additional meetings to the regular monthly meeting in January and February, to have two meetings each of those months. Laura Gilmore made a motion for the committee to accept the recommendation of Ms. Whitaker. Ann Hill seconded the motion and it passed by a unanimous vote.

Old Business

City of Pensacola CRA Urban Design Overlay District – Ms. Whitaker opened the topic by stating that the City’s CRA is currently reviewing the impact of the design overlay which describes design requirements for new construction of homes within the CRA districts.

Helen Gibson, the Director for the City of Pensacola Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) gave a brief background on the design overlay’s current status. Ms. Gibson shared that the issue of maintaining neighborhood character have been under consideration 20 years or more. Within the past five years the City brought in design consultants to hold a series of public meetings, or charettes, and gathered significant community input. She said that residents’ concerns related to retaining traditional features for residential structures, so that new infill development might be indistinguishable in design and character from the existing homes in a neighborhood. Those features include finished floor elevation, roof pitch, ceiling height, and porch depth.

AHAC member Ritz, representing the City Planning Board, spoke briefly as to the importance of character of housing in a community. Commissioner May added that it is important to continue to review the demographics of the specific CRA neighborhoods to be attuned to how some redevelopment, even well-intentioned affordable development, has changed the resident character of traditional neighborhoods and displaced some long-time residents.

Ms. Gibson continued by confirming that the CRA is indeed reviewing some options for administrative waivers for some of the design requirement to allow affordable development within the CRA. She also added that the City and the CRA are considering other ways to address the affordability of new housing beyond the cost-basis of construction.

New Business

No new business

Public Comment

No speakers present

Announcements/written communications

Tim Evans stated that the results of the BCC meeting will be communicated to all applicants the day following the meeting. Furthermore, since the 'regular' monthly meeting (first Tuesday) for January falls before the Commission vote for new members, and is also immediately following the New Year holidays, it was suggested that the meeting be backed up at least a week. Ms.

Whitaker stated that they have not yet been able to confirm the availability of the meeting room as the City's calendar for 2022 had not been widely publicized. Once space availability is known a meeting schedule for January and February will be communicated to the newly seated members of the Committee.

Adjournment:

There being no further business or discussion, the meeting adjourned at 9:39 am.

Respectfully submitted by: Timothy Evans

Pending Approval