

ESCAMBIA-PENSACOLA AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

August 2, 2022

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 August 02, 2022 at 9:00 AM.

Committee members present: Ed Brown, Laura Gilmore, Brenton Goodman, Pensacola City Council President Ann Hill, Deborah Mays, Maya Moss, Paul Ritz, and Crystal Scott

Committee members absent: Patricia Mackovic, Escambia County Commissioner Lumon May

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

Call to Order, Welcome, and Roll Call

Chair Crystal Scott called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. She requested those present at the meeting table introduce themselves, after which she acknowledged that there was a quorum established. She stated that one absent member, Commissioner Lumon May, had requested an excused absence. Paul Ritz made a motion to recognize the absence as such. The motion was seconded by Laura Gilmore and passed unanimously.

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.

Minutes

Paul Ritz made the motion to approve the minutes from the meeting of July 05, 2022 as submitted. Ann Hill seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

As there was a guest speaker invited for the morning's meeting, the chair rearranged the meeting's printed agenda and moved New Business (and the speaker) to the next item.

New Business

Ms. Scott introduced the speaker, Mr. Sam Young, President and CEO of Pensacola Habitat for Humanity. Mr. Young began his presentation with visuals showing the current challenges to the task of developing affordable housing. He stated that with the escalation of costs of land and materials the median cost of housing in the area has increased significantly over the past few years. He said that, although it is within the mission of his agency, the reality of providing affordable housing to households with income below 50 per cent of the area median income (AMI) level is "nearly impossible". To address the challenge, he spoke more broadly about the specific work of Pensacola Habitat.

Pensacola Habitat operates four major programs within Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties to assist low income households address shelter needs. The first is a program for homeownership for families below

80% AMI. Mr. Young said Pensacola Habitat is one of the very few affordable developers in the area, and they expect build approximately 40 units of housing for this population in the current year. The second program is Community Development, which includes repairs for current homeowners in order to keep their homes habitable. The third program Pensacola Habitat offers in the community is HUD certified homeownership counseling, being one of only two HUD certified counseling programs in the area. Lastly, Pensacola Habitat operates a 'sibling' Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) to offer housing opportunities which are outside of the strict Habitat mission area, for instance they may build for moderate income households (80% to 120% AMI).

He said the agency currently faces three significant challenges to meeting its mission: 1) finding a way to reach the entire continuum of household incomes with shelter solutions; 2) the high cost of buildable land in the community, and; 3) a funding strategy which allows the organization to leverage against its current balance sheet assets to raise capital funds for building. Mr. Young said the work of the AHAC could assist in several areas. He mentioned the opportunity for Habitat and their home buyers to access available government funded subsidies (SHIP, HOME) may make home ownership a reality for the lower income households. He also mentioned that the availability of City or County owned surplus property for affordable development, either donated or sold at modest cost, could keep the cost of development, and the cost of the finished units, low. Finally he mentioned that finding relief from some of the government regulation in development also keeps costs down.

Some discussion followed the presentation, with members of the committee recalling the previous discussions of some Incentive Plan items with a general desire that current processes could be more streamlined.

Recognizing the lateness of the hour the Chair moved to the Public Comment agenda item.

Public Comment

Mr. Eduardo Lara invited the members of the Committee to an event coming at the end of the month when Shane Phillips will be a speaker for CivicCon at an event at the Rex Theater (8/29/22). The following day Mr. Phillips will be holding a limited attendance 'Roundtable' discussion with interested community leaders.

Announcements/written communications

Marcie Whitaker reminded the members that the next meeting will be on August 17th, as we have doubled up for the month to hear from the County's planning, zoning, and land use department Director, Mr. Horace Jones. The meeting will be in the same space and also be at 9:00 am.

Following that, the next *regularly scheduled* meeting of the AHAC will be September 06, 2022 at 9:00 am in the Hagler Mason Conference Room of Pensacola City Hall.

Adjournment:

There being no further business or discussion, the meeting adjourned at 10:10 am.

Submitted by Timothy Evans