

AHAC Report to City Commission—Calendar Years 2019 & 2020

Question 1: What is the Mission of the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee?

Since 1992, the City of Gainesville has participated in the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program which provides Florida Cities and Counties with funds to promote and preserve affordable housing and homeownership. The SHIP Program is governed by Chapter 420, Part VII, of the Florida Statutes and is administered locally by the City's Housing and Community Development Division.

Florida Statutes Section 420.9076 states that in order to receive SHIP Funds, cities and counties must establish an Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC). According to the State statutes, the AHAC's primary purpose is to review all the City's plans, policies, codes, regulations and procedures that impact the costs of housing, including the costs of developing and preserving housing. Based on that review, the AHAC is to develop and submit an Incentives and Recommendations Report (IRR, also referred to as the AHAC Report or the Incentives Report). The IRR recommends changes that are intended to increase the City's supply of affordable housing.

In a more general sense, the AHAC sees two other important components of its mission. The first component is collecting citizen input about housing issues and sharing that input with the City Commission. The other component is analyzing best practices for affordable housing.

Question 2: What are the three most important things that the AHAC did during calendar years 2019 and 2020?

The most important thing that the AHAC did during calendar years 2019 and 2020 was develop and submit the IRR. Completing that task provided the City Commission with thoughtful recommendations and analysis of the City's plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and incentives related to the development of affordable housing. In addition, submitting the IRR to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation met a State requirement for the City to continue to receive SHIP funds.

Collecting citizen input and providing that input to the City Commission is always an important part of AHAC's activities. As detailed in the IRR, in 2019, the AHAC conducted six community engagement meetings (At least one in each City Commission District) before adopting the IRR at a public hearing on October 8, 2019. The AHAC presented their recommendations to the City Commission on November 7, 2019. Following the AHAC's presentation, the City Commission discussed and accepted the IRR.

Finally, in both 2019 and 2020, the AHAC reviewed certain affordable housing development projects that requested a City funding contribution. After those reviews, the AHAC forwarded a funding recommendation to the decision-making entity (either the City Commission or the City Manager). In each case, the decision-making entity followed AHAC's funding recommendation. As a result, the Royal Park Apartments (State Apartment Incentive Loan or SAIL Program, 2019), and Woodland Park, Phase 2 (Low Income Housing Tax Credit or LIHTC Program, 2020) had a chance for additional state or federal funds.

Question 3: What are the three most important things the AHAC is working on right now?

The three most important things the AHAC is working on are summarized below:

1. The AHAC has reviewed the Housing Action Plan and will follow its implementation;
2. The AHAC is working to gather public input and analyze data to develop the IRR. The AHAC will submit the IRR to the City Commission by the end of the year; and
3. The AHAC is working to develop new, better and clearer criteria to use when ranking affordable housing projects that request City funds in support of the project's application for LIHTC or SAIL funds.

Question 4: What could the City Commission do to help the AHAC better serve our neighbors?

Continue to keep the AHAC apprised of the status of affordable housing developments, projects, and initiatives.

Question 5: What else does the City Commission need to know about the AHAC?

- The AHAC has seven new members, but they are fast learners and are highly committed;
- The AHAC wants development, but it must be the right kind of development;
- The AHAC wants to collaborate with other stakeholders and other City boards; and
- The AHAC feels a responsibility to represent the people who are served by affordable housing.