

City of Gainesville

SHIP Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC)

MINUTES

Workshop Meeting

Via Zoom, 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 12, 2021

Committee Members Present

1. Jamie Bell, Vice-Chair
2. Gigi Simmons
3. Saeed Khan
4. Michael Raburn
5. Mary Lou Hildreth
6. Shayna Rich
7. Aditya Basu-Dutta

Committee Members Absent

1. Eric McLarthy
2. Belinda Smith

Staff Present

1. Deborah Bowie, Assistant City Manager
2. Helen Harris, Housing & Community Development Supervisor
3. Phimetto Lewis, Housing Program Coordinator
4. John Wachtel, Neighborhood Planning Coordinator
5. Andrew Persons, Interim Director, Department of Sustainable Development

Others Present

1. Ashon Nesbit, Florida Housing Coalition
2. Blaise Denton, Florida Housing Coalition
3. Kody Glazer, Florida Housing Coalition
4. Malcolm Kiner, Gainesville Housing Authority

Call to Order

6:02 p.m.

Discussion of the City of Gainesville Housing Action Plan

Ms. Harris introduced the item and Ms. Lewis, who began a presentation summarizing the Plan and its recommended strategies. Several Committee members said that technical issues were making it difficult to hear Ms. Lewis, so she paused the presentation to try to reconnect to the meeting.

The technical problems continued, so Ms. Harris asked Mr. Wachtel to finish the presentation.

He emphasized that over time the Consultant, the Committee, and staff have received much input, including data and citizen engagement. He noted that with the emergence of the pandemic, the focus of engagement changed from in-person to online.

He compared the strategies in the Plan to tools in a toolbox, each one could be effective for some, but not all problems.

He explained that Florida Housing Coalition (FHC), the Consultant, had grouped the strategies into the following three categories: Diversify Funding Sources; Add Zoning Flexibility in exchange for Affordable Housing; and Increase Equity by Promoting Permanent Affordability.

After Mr. Wachtel briefly explained each of the strategies, Ms. Lewis who had rejoined the meeting, addressed some questions about Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) that were raised at the end of the December meeting. She shared that much of the input provided, emphasized that housing problems were related to a lack of choice, not just in terms of price, but also in terms of type, location, condition and other factors, and that many believed that removing some restrictions on ADUs could help address that lack of choice, especially for smaller households.

Ms. Lewis also noted how ADUs could increase opportunities for people to age in place.

Ms. Hildreth asked if the City received Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Mr. Wachtel responded that the City received an annual appropriation of CDBG and HOME funds. He said that staff would provide additional funding details as part of an orientation.

Mr. Basu-Dutta commented that considering locational criteria when expediting affordable housing projects might increase equity within the City. He asked if that was being done. Mr. Wachtel responded that currently it was not, although AHAC might have that conversation in the future.

Dr. Khan asked if ADUs could be sold as separate units. Mr. Wachtel responded that they could not.

Mr. Raburn raised the issue of Employer Assisted Housing being too closely tied to employment. He was concerned about situations where the loss of a job could automatically result in the loss of a home. The Committee agreed that such a situation needed to be specifically avoided. Staff from FHC provided examples involving the University of Chicago and Howard University that dealt with that issue in different ways.

General Committee Comments

Commissioner Simmons requested that the Consultant working on the update of the City's Comprehensive Plan provide an update to AHAC at a future meeting. Ms. Bell asked staff to send AHAC more information about when the City Commission discusses items related to housing problems.

Adjournment

7:21 p.m.

Jamie Bell, Vice-Chair

Date