

**OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES
OF THE
COMMISSION ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING (CAH)
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA**

APRIL 18, 2024

**THURSDAY
10:30 A.M.**

**2300 N. JOG ROAD
WEST PALM BEACH, FL**

MEMBERS:

Commissioner Mack Bernard
George "Adam" Campbell
Lynda Charles
Shirley Erazo
Corey O'Gorman
William "Elliott" Johnson
Ezra M. Krieg, Chair
Tim Kubrick
Amy Robbins, Vice Chair
Aquannette Thomas

COUNTY STAFF PRESENT:

Yvette Cueto, Planner II, Housing and Economic Development (HED)
Tammy Fields, Assistant County Administrator
Carlos Serrano, Division Director II, HED
Michael Sklar, Principal Planner, HED

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE:

Kenny Bowron, MCD Housing
David Brandt, Executive Director Housing Finance Authority, HED
Sheila Brown, Senior Planner, HED
Jonathan Brown, Director II, HED
Suzanne Cabrera, President & CEO, Housing Leadership Coalition (HLC)
Sherry Howard, Division Director V, HED
Elizabeth Jo Miller, Senior Planner, HED
Stefania Russell, Planner II, HED

ALSO PRESENT:

Charlotte Burnett, General Counsel, West Palm Beach Housing Authority
Jeff DeMario, Vita Nova
Greg Gabriel, Pinnacle
Inger Harvey, Executive Director, Pahokee Housing Authority
Carol Jones-Gilbert, Palm Beach County Housing Authority
Linda Odum, Deputy Director, West Palm Beach Housing Authority
Ashley Whidby, Deputy Director, Boca Raton Housing Authority

Bill Zunamon, The NRP Group

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT & COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE STAFF PRESENT:
Jillian Zalewska, Deputy Clerk

I. Call to Order

The chair called the meeting to order at 10:41 a.m.

II. Roll Call

Present: Lynda Charles, Shirley Erazo, Elliott Johnson, Ezra Krieg, and
Tim Kubrick

Absent: Adam Campbell

Via Teleconference: Commissioner Mack Bernard, Corey O'Gorman, Amy
Robbins, and Aquannette Thomas

(CLERK'S NOTE: Due to the absence of a quorum, no votes were taken.)

III. Approval of Remote Attendance

No vote was taken.

IV. Approval of Agenda

No vote was taken.

V. Approval of Minutes (February and March)

No vote was taken.

VI. Old Business

Ms. Fields commended the HED staff for their work at the April 16th Board of County Commissioners (BCC) workshop. She said that more than \$100 million in expenditures toward the creation of workforce and affordable housing would be discussed at the BCC meeting on May 7.

Development Review Forum

Mr. Johnson discussed his attendance at the forum, which was held by the Zoning Division of Planning, Zoning and Building (PZB) in February. He said PZB had informed the attendees that they did not have enough staff to process applications because of the shortage of affordable housing for employees. He also reported that PZB was returning

to 1992 code formatting and was considering flexible regulations, but the director did not have information about self-regulating development orders. Mr. Johnson stated that he had subsequently spoken to Kevin Ratterree of GL Homes, who said that his staff had provided draft language for a self-regulating development order.

Regarding accessory dwelling units (ADUs), Mr. Johnson said that Zoning was considering creation of a mechanism that would allow the construction of ADUs on lots with unity of title; however, he felt that the CAH should provide language that would permit ADUs regardless of whether lots could be unified. He also said that the cost of transfer of development rights had been discussed and that he would follow up further. Mr. Johnson summarized that he thought the meeting was a useful forum for consideration policies and procedural tools that could be used to address the housing problem.

Mr. Johnson asked that an item regarding RFPs and the housing bond be included on the next agenda.

In response to a question posed by Ms. Charles, Mr. Johnson said that he thought it would be appropriate to send a follow-up letter regarding items discussed at the forum. Ms. Charles also expressed concerns about the proposed policy concerning ADUs and properties with unity of title.

Mr. Serrano stated that he would contact the Zoning Division to find out if additional meetings were scheduled.

The members discussed the self-regulating development order language and the possibility of drafting a letter from the CAH.

Ms. Fields suggested that the letter should be sent to the County commissioners.

STAFF DIRECTION:

The CAH directed staff to draft a letter for approval at the next committee meeting.

Mr. Serrano proposed that the members utilize the term “custom property development regulations” instead of “self-regulating development order.”

Ms. Charles suggested informing the Zoning Division about the CAH’s intention before submitting the letter to the BCC.

Mr. Johnson stated that the CAH functioned as an advisory body to the BCC and that contemporaneous notice to the Zoning Division would be sufficient.

Mr. Krieg asked Mr. Johnson to provide additional information about his request that a discussion of the RFP process be included as an agenda item.

Mr. Johnson stated the CAH should develop a process for tracking RFPs that were disseminated and the responses that were received.

Ms. Fields said that items pertaining to the RFPs would be presented to the Board at the May 7 BCC meeting. She offered to share copies of the agenda items with the CAH.

Mr. Brown informed the committee that all housing bond RFPs were closed and that the selection committee recommendations were posted on the HED website.

Mr. Krieg suggested that an agenda item pertaining to RFP updates could be added to the meeting agendas.

Mr. Johnson inquired if the CAH could assist staff with determining how well the RFPs were being targeted and if changes should be made to the language of future RFPs.

Mr. Brown responded that the selection committee had made recommendations on the proposals that were responsive to the RFP, and Ms. Fields said the information was going to be included in the item that would be presented to the Board.

Mr. Serrano said that a link would be shared with the CAH members once the information was posted.

VII. New Business

Public Housing Authority Discussion

Mr. Krieg thanked the housing authority representatives for attending. He asked them to discuss the role of housing authorities in the community as well as how the CAH could provide assistance in its capacity as an advisory body to the Board.

Ms. Erazo, Executive Director of the Delray Beach Housing Authority, provided an overview of the services offered by her organization. She said that resources were limited and there was a waiting list of more than 2,000 people. Ms. Erazo stated that affordable housing units were desperately needed in the community.

Ms. Odum stated that the West Palm Beach Housing Authority oversaw Section 8 vouchers, tax-credit properties, project-based vouchers, and a small number of public housing units. In response to a request by Mr. Krieg, she explained that project-based vouchers were tied to particular units, whereas Section 8 vouchers could be utilized anywhere in the market.

Responding to a question about housing inventory, Ms. Odum clarified that public housing units were being repositioned to increase inventory, attract financing, and utilize land more effectively by increasing density.

Ms. Erazo noted that repositioning public housing units allowed housing authorities to better maintain and operate the properties.

Ms. Jones-Gilbert stated that the Palm Beach County Housing Authority had not repositioned any public housing units. She explained that the agency had a diverse voucher portfolio and ran several programs designed to serve low-income residents and individuals living in public housing. Ms. Jones-Gilbert said that the agency was unable to fulfill requests for emergency housing. She also stated that the number of applications for housing units far exceeded the availability, and individuals with vouchers were struggling to find suitable housing. In addition, Ms. Jones-Gilbert discussed the challenges presented by the increasing cost of property insurance.

Ms. Harvey discussed the many opportunities available in the Glades region. She stated that the Pahokee Housing Authority was working with a development consultant to determine how 18.5 acres of available land could be utilized for housing. She said that other available parcels could also be used for the development of housing units. Ms. Harvey said that the housing authority had repositioned a portion of their public housing units and also utilized low-income tax credits and Section 8 vouchers.

Ms. Jones-Gilbert spoke about some of the Palm Beach County Housing Authority's achievements, including the acquisition of 240 housing units, plans to redevelop land in unincorporated Palm Beach County, two homeless housing projects, and the construction of the Cottage Homes development.

Ms. Whidby stated that the Boca Raton Housing Authority operated 95 public housing units that were being repositioned as part of the voucher program. She said that the agency sought to increase density to maximize the number of units on the site and was applying for tax credits to fund the development. Ms. Whidby also stated that the housing authority was considering options to expand and redevelop 51 affordable housing units that did not have subsidies attached. She explained that the agency oversaw more than 600 housing vouchers, some of which were designated for veterans.

Mr. Johnson asked Ms. Jones-Gilbert to discuss the mechanisms by which voucher recipients searched for housing units.

Ms. Jones-Gilbert said that individuals utilized the website affordablehousing.com. She said that the housing authority had also created a housing navigator position to assist individuals searching for units. She also discussed additional efforts such as providing funds for supportive services, engaging in outreach and retention efforts with landlords, providing furnishings, and offering transportation to individuals searching for housing. Ms. Jones-Gilbert said that the agency applied for grants to assist in their efforts and was communicating with the Department of Housing and Urban Development regarding the need for supportive service funding, particularly for foster youth programs. She also noted that many individuals and families struggled to meet the requirements for first-month, last-month, and security deposits.

Ms. Charles said that Community Partners of South Florida worked in partnership with the West Palm Beach Housing Authority and Catholic Charities. She expressed agreement with Ms. Jones-Gilbert's statement regarding the difficulty individuals faced in obtaining funds to pay for upfront expenses including security deposits.

Discussion ensued regarding the challenges faced by voucher recipients in securing housing.

Ms. Erazo noted that portability applied to housing vouchers, which increased competition for housing by allowing individuals who moved to Florida to utilize vouchers that had been issued in other states.

In response to a question from Mr. Krieg, Ms. Erazo explained that voucher recipients struggled to pay the unsubsidized portion of their rental expenses. She also stated that residents often had difficulty finding housing situated near their workplaces or within preferred school zones.

The housing authority representatives discussed issues regarding mobility and the circumstances that led to tenants becoming rent burdened.

Mr. Krieg asked the attendees how the CAH could help facilitate the housing authorities' work.

Ms. Erazo said that land was needed for the development of affordable housing. Ms. Jones-Gilbert noted that projects developed by the housing authorities were deeply affordable and targeted individuals with incomes well below the median AMI.

Ms. Harvey said that funding for demucking in the Glades area would help attract developers.

Ms. Fields stated that the demucking issue had recently been discussed at a BCC meeting, and staff were exploring the possibility of setting aside funds to address the situation.

Ms. Burnett spoke about the need for additional funds to address financing gaps.

Ms. Odum said that funding was needed to assist voucher recipients with security deposits.

Mr. Johnson asked the housing authority representatives to review the "Housing for All" plan and provide their feedback and recommendations.

(CLERK'S NOTE: Lynda Charles left the meeting.)

Mr. Brown spoke about the need for a centralized mechanism for gathering and sharing data. He also invited the attendees to apply for the vacant seats on the CAH.

Ms. Whidby responded to Mr. Brown's comment about data tracking. She said that most of the voucher recipients served by the Boca Raton Housing Authority had income levels at or below 30 percent of the AMI.

VIII. Member Comments

Mr. Krieg discussed House Bill 1365, which prohibited public camping and sleeping, as well as other legislation that could potentially affect homeless individuals. He invited everyone to attend a meeting on April 29th to discuss strategies for assisting homeless individuals in Palm Beach County.

It was confirmed that the next CAH meeting would take place at the same location on May 16th.

IX. Adjournment

At 11:31 a.m., the chair declared the meeting adjourned.