

AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee of Monroe County conducted a meeting on **August 22, 2012** beginning at 10:04 AM at the Marathon Government Center, 2798 Overseas Highway, Marathon, Florida.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY MEMBERS:

Sylvia Murphy	Present
Sherry Phillips	Absent
Heather Roberts	Absent
James D. Cameron	Present
Randy Wall	Absent
Warren Leamard	Present
Ken Naylor	Present
Morgan Hill	Present
Ed Swift	Present
William Wiatt	Present
Jerry Gaddis	Absent
Ron Miller	Absent

STAFF

Mitch Harvey, Comprehensive Planning Manager Present

Roll Call

Mitch Harvey introduced himself to the Committee members. Present were James Cameron, Warren Leamard, Morgan Hill, Ed Swift and William Wiatt, which did not make a quorum.

Election of chair

Election of chair was postponed due to the lack of a quorum.

Introduction and overview by staff

Mr. Harvey explained that the reason for the creation of this committee is to review LHAP Incentive Strategies and make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners. These strategies are used as part of the process for promotion of Affordable Housing of the County. The implementing agency is the Housing Authority, but Growth Management and the County are charged with the responsibility of updating and approving these strategies. Other subjects are allowed to be discussed at the meetings, also. Mr. Harvey stated that some recommended changes will be shared with the Committee today.

Sylvia Murphy and Ken Naylor joined the proceedings, thereby making a quorum.

Election of chair

Motion: Mr. Swift made a motion to nominate Mr. Cameron as the Chair of the Committee. Mr. Wiatt seconded the motion. There was no opposition. The motion passed unanimously.

Review of adopted LHAP Incentive Strategies

Mr. Harvey explained that Section 420.9076 requires the County to adopt incentive strategies as part of the local housing initiative. There are 11 strategies in the State Statutes. Mr. Harvey submitted the LHAP strategies that currently exist with strikeouts and underlines updating those strategies based on the Land Development Code and some of the ordinances in place. Two strategies were added which are required by State Statute.

The first strategy is expedited permitting. The changes that Mr. Harvey made reflect the language that is presently in the code which talks about ROGO requirements and permits for affordable housing receive priority. Chair Cameron and Mr. Harvey then discussed the permits held aside each year for affordable housing and how many of those permits have been banked.

The second strategy, modification of impact fee requirements, the County shall continue to waive impact fees for affordable housing with no recommended changes.

The next category is flexibility and densities for affordable housing. Mr. Harvey is recommending some cleanup language to make it clearer on how “allocated” versus “max net density” is used.

The next category, reservation of infrastructure capacity for affordable housing, was not in the presently adopted LHAP incentives, but is a requirement of the State Statutes and has been added. At the present time the projected capacity far exceeds the projected needs. This strategy includes hurricane evacuation. The County is in the process right now of approving an MOU between the County and the cities for the variables to rerun the hurricane model, which will affect how many permits are allocated every year.

The next strategy, allowance of affordable accessory residential units and residential zoning districts, was not in the previous LHAP Incentive Strategies, but is required by State Statutes. This refers back to the issue of the number of units and the density is regulated by ROGO.

The next category, reduction of parking and setback requirements for affordable housing, is in place with no change.

Allowance of flexible lot configurations is also in place with no change.

Modification of street requirements is also in place with no change. Mr. Harvey explained that encompasses internal street configurations, where driveways are, how emergency access is provided and is part of the site plan review process.

The next strategy, cost of housing, reflects the language presently in the code. This tightens up the language that requires the County staff to review cost of housing as a factor in reviewing proposed development.

Mr. Swift requested that Mr. Harvey send the Committee members an e-mail of the changes made and the date this will be before the BOCC so the Committee members can comment before the Board if they wish. Mr. Harvey clarified for Mr. Naylor that impact fees are waived and the permit fees can be requested to be waived in front of the BOCC. Mr. Swift pointed out that on the second line “waives” should be “waive.” Mr. Harvey agreed.

The next item, provide inventory of County-owned properties, is ongoing with no change.

The next strategy is to support development near transportation hubs and major employment centers. Mr. Harvey highlighted the fact that the County has an activity center program associated with the Livable CommiKeys Plans. The idea of the activity center is to prepare overlays that allow affordable employee housing in concentrated commercial centers. The County has identified activity centers in all of the LCPs in Key Largo, Tavernier, Big Pine Key, Stock Island and the upcoming Lower Keys LCP, and this is on the BOCC agenda next month. Mr. Harvey explained to Mr. Swift that the way affordable housing is encouraged is by providing housing incentives and for mixed use developments in activity centers.

The next strategy, inclusionary housing, the existing language in Section 30-161(B)(2)(a) was reflected, which requires that 30 percent of residential use be affordable.

The next item was added on, affordable housing incentive program, which is a short synopsis of Section 130-161.1 of the Monroe County Code.

Staff presentation was concluded and Mr. Harvey was willing to entertain recommendations from the Committee. Chair Cameron suggested reviewing the recommendations created by the last Affordable Housing Committee as possible things to include, as the BOCC previously approved going forward on all of them.

Motion: Mr. Swift made a motion for Mr. Harvey to supply those recommendations of the prior Committee to the Planning Department and current Committee members for review before the next meeting. Mr. Wiatt seconded the motion. There was no opposition. The motion passed unanimously.

Questions and answers

Mr. Swift asked to add to the agenda two items: A discussion of the state of and the dynamics of affordable housing in each area of the Keys, and a resolution prepared by Mr. Swift regarding the priority tax credit set-aside for Monroe County. The Committee members agreed to add those items to the agenda. Mr. Harvey pointed out that this Committee is tasked with looking at the LHAP incentive strategies, but that the members are more than welcome to discuss other issues. Chair Cameron commented that discussion among the Committee members is imperative to the Committee being able to contribute in a significant way.

Mr. Swift began by explaining how Key West right now is in a housing crisis position. There are no rental units available in Key West for longer than two days. There is a two to three-year waiting list for senior housing. Even though the economy in Key West is recovering, the volatility in the real estate market makes owning a home less and less affordable.

Ms. Hill stated that, although not as drastic as Key West, Marathon is in a crisis situation. Ms. Hill does not know of any affordable units sitting vacant. Mr. Naylor added there is a slight bit more turnover in Marathon, which indicates people have a couple more options they can move to over time, but Seagrape and Meridian West are full and have waiting lists.

Mr. Cameron stated that his impression from talking to realtors is that Big Pine Key is not recovering very much. Mr. Cameron pointed out that banks are not lending money to qualified buyers, which points to a need for more affordable rental units. Mr. Swift described his rent-to-own program in Island Village. Mr. Swift has received information from realtors about rental increases occurring in the near future.

Commissioner Murphy reported that Habitat for Humanity has broken ground on the first of seven units in the Upper Keys that she believes will be rental units. Mr. Swift stated that the South Florida Regional Planning Council would benefit from input from Monroe County due to the County's experience with these issues.

Mr. Swift then switched topics to explain the federal tax credit dollars supplied to the states, which then filter down to the counties. Monroe County was in a priority position for receiving a certain amount of those funds. That has manifested itself in many low and very low income projects throughout the Keys. There has been recent discussion in the Housing Finance portion of the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) about that being an unfair advantage for Monroe County.

Mr. Swift read for the Committee members a resolution that he drafted in opposition to that discussion. Mr. Swift then explained how these federal tax credits are created. Mr. Naylor explained what it means to the Keys to have priority to these funds. Mr. Naylor added that this proposal is more than just discussion at this point, that the state agency that administers these credits actually removed the Keys' set-aside from their proposed rules two or three weeks ago.

Commissioner Murphy then clarified that the Habitat homes in Key Largo are for ownership, not rental.

Motion: Mr. Swift made a motion, for all the reasons included in the resolution, for the Chairman to send the resolution to the DEO from this Board and on to the BOCC in defense of low and very low income housing. Ms. Hill seconded the motion. There was no opposition. The motion passed unanimously.

Announcement of next meeting

Mr. Harvey informed the Committee members that the next meeting will be on Wednesday, September 12, 2012 at 10 a.m. at the Marathon Government Center in the media room. There are more than ten people available for the next meeting.

Mr. Swift asked for permission to have the resolution go out without signature since time is of the essence. Chair Cameron and Mr. Harvey agreed. Mr. Naylor suggested sending letters to the Florida Housing website in opposition of the Keys losing their priority funding. Mr. Naylor will send Mr. Harvey the link to the website for dissemination to the Committee members.

Motion: Mr. Leamard made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Chair Cameron seconded the motion. There was no opposition. The motion passed unanimously.

The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee meeting was adjourned at 11:01 a.m.