

FLAGLER COUNTY
AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting Minutes
Aug 27, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: *Trish Giaccone (Chair), Nicole Graves, Kim Carney,*

MEMBERS PRESENT VIRTUALLY: *Commissioner Andy Dance (AHAC Elected Official)*

MEMBERS ABSENT: *Angela Smith*

EXCUSED ABSENT: *Valerie Clymer (Vice Chair), Sandra Shank, Rick Belhumeur*

STAFF PRESENT (All staff of Flagler County BOCC and Palm Coast City Council):

- *Jacqueline Gonzalez (Site Development Coordinator -- City of Palm Coast)*
- *Eduardo Diaz Cordero (Housing Program Coordinator – Flagler County)*
- *Devrie Paradowski (Housing Program Manager—Flagler County)*
- *Kim Bennett (Human Services Program Manager—Flagler County)*
- *Sheryl Simmons (Administrative Assistant-Flagler County)*
- *Adam Mengel (Growth Management Director—Flagler County)*
- *Joe Hegedus (Health and Human Services Director—Flagler County)*

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: *Patricia Lauer, Mid Florida Housing Partnership, Marcus Davis, Blue Sky Communities*

1. Call to order, Roll Call, and Pledge to the Flag: Sheryl Simmons took roll call and found an absence of a quorum.

2. Approval of Agenda: Absence of a quorum.

3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: Absence of a quorum.

4. Agenda Items:

4a) Presentation: Shawn Wilson of Blue Sky Communities, an affordable housing development company, presented virtually to the Committee with Marcus Davis.

Shawn explained that their company competes for tax credits through a federal program administered by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) in Tallahassee. He highlighted the importance of the 9 percent tax credit for newly built apartment complexes, which has a funding cycle in July.

Shawn noted that no applications were submitted in Flagler County for 2024, with only one—Flagler Pointe Apartments—submitted in 2023. He encouraged the Committee to support tax credit developments in Flagler County, emphasizing that although the local government contribution is minimal, it is critical for making applications competitive. He estimated that \$460,000 could be sourced from SHIP or other funding programs.

He explained that the 9 percent tax credit program requires all units to be rented to households earning 60 percent or less of the area median income, with a 50-year affordability period. The 4 percent credit program, however, requires higher local

49 contributions and typically involves tax-exempt bonds issued through a local Housing
50 Finance Authority (HFA), unlike the 9 percent program.

51
52 Shawn clarified that the \$460,000 contribution requirement is determined by FHFC. When
53 Devrie Paradowski asked if fee waivers count toward this contribution, Shawn confirmed
54 that they do not.

55
56 Chair Trish Giaccone requested Shawn send the application to Devrie, which he agreed to
57 do.

58
59 Devrie confirmed that local governments issue Requests for Proposals (RFPs) in alignment
60 with the FHFC application cycle.

61
62 Chair Trish Giaccone asked for Shawn's recommendations on how the county could pursue
63 this direction. He suggested that if the county or city owns a parcel, it could be used for
64 development, though it would not count toward the required local government contribution.

65
66 Shawn advised the Committee and staff to mark their calendars for July 2025, to issue a
67 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) or RFP in March to attract developers. He
68 recommended networking with other local governments for RFP templates, noting that while
69 the state doesn't require an RFP, identifying the \$460,000 contribution would make Flagler
70 County an attractive option for developers like Blue Sky Communities. He added that they
71 typically pursue high-density urban developments, even in rural areas, citing a project with
72 90 units on two acres.

73
74 Devrie remarked that Palm Coast and Flagler County generally don't allow densities above
75 12 units per acre, except in areas like the Town Center CRA or within Master Planned
76 Developments (MPDs) such as the Westward Expansion. Jacqueline Gonzalez confirmed
77 that these areas could accommodate higher densities. When asked about the possibility of
78 90 units on three acres, Jacqueline responded that it was feasible depending on the
79 proposed parcel's use.

80
81 Shawn, reviewing a map of Palm Coast, humorously suggested using the Wal-Mart parking
82 lot, implying it would go unnoticed. He then shifted to discussing the potential repurposing of
83 institutional properties for future developments.

84
85 Jacqueline asked if Blue Sky was hesitant about requesting rezoning. Shawn responded
86 that while not ideal, Blue Sky's mission is to help local governments achieve their goals, and
87 they would assist in any specific objectives the county identifies.

88
89 Shawn confirmed that developers only compete within their size category. When Devrie
90 asked if the \$460,000 contribution applied to medium-sized counties, Shawn confirmed it
91 did. Devrie then asked about the most common funding sources, and Shawn listed them as:

92 SHIP

93 HOME

94 Local Housing Trust Fund

95 He added that some communities also use General Revenue for the required contributions.
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97

98 Marcus Davis requested Devrie share his email with the Committee for follow-up questions.

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100
101 **4b) Staff Updates and Action Item Follow-up:**

- 102 1. Jacqueline Gonzalez shared that another developer was considering a project similar to
103 Blue Sky in Palm Coast. Nicole Graves inquired if it was senior-specific, but Jacqueline
104 confirmed it was intended for families.
105 2. Devrie Paradowski asked Jacqueline if Palm Coast had any regulatory incentives specific to
106 affordable housing, as a developer had recently inquired. Jacqueline confirmed that Palm
107 Coast currently has no such incentives.

108
109 Devrie followed up on a previous conversation, referencing Kim Carney's observation that
110 developers of affordable housing primarily need cash. Devrie highlighted the available
111 funds, noting that SHIP was the main source for the county and CDBG for the city.
112 However, both have restrictions that limit their ability to meet local government contribution
113 requirements.

114
115 She informed the Committee that her department was exploring additional funding sources
116 and encouraged the Committee to recommend staff pursue this. Such a recommendation
117 would bolster these efforts.

118
119 Devrie also supported Committee Member Sandra Shank's suggestion to look at how other
120 counties, such as St. Johns, manage similar challenges, emphasizing the need for Flagler
121 County to be bold and innovative despite its more limited resources.

122
123 Devrie compared the county's rapid growth to a low income person receiving a sudden
124 increase in wages, noting the challenge of meeting medium-sized county needs, given
125 Flagler's more recent designation as such. She encouraged the Committee to focus on
126 solutions and to challenge staff to find ways to accomplish goals rather than accepting a
127 lack of capacity as a final answer. She suggested to ask how something could be done
128 rather than if it could be done.

129
130 Kim Carney asked where additional funding could come from, and a Committee member
131 suggested it could be sourced from general revenue. Kim Carney emphasized the
132 importance of not being afraid to ask for funding, even if it starts as a wish list, and
133 recommended making it a recurring agenda item. Devrie noted that general revenue funds
134 are limited, so staff will need to seek alternative funding sources. Kim reiterated that the
135 Commission would need to fund priorities, and she recommended making housing a priority.
136 Trish Giaccone (Chair) agreed, urging the staff to begin taking action now.

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139 **4c): Committee Discussion**

- 140
141 1. Commissioner Andy Dance (Elected Official) updated the Committee on a proposed
142 ordinance to preserve older tree canopies. He noted that it had received limited
143 feedback but could impact housing affordability. However, the ordinance was flexible
144 and not punitive. It was scheduled for review by the BOCC on September 16th at 5:30
145 pm.

146
147 Kim Carney asked if there was a housing impact statement, and Adam clarified that

148 none was required by statute, referring specifically to a business impact statement.

149
150 Trish Giaccone (Chair) reminded the Committee that their November meeting was
151 scheduled for the day before Thanksgiving and proposed rescheduling. The Committee
152 agreed to meet on November 12th, pending final confirmation at the next meeting.

153
154 Kim Carney asked why Devrie had distributed a handout on the Missing Middle tax
155 exemptions which indicated that some communities cannot opt out. Devrie explained
156 that Flagler County cannot opt out due to the lack of sufficient housing options for the
157 current population based on income levels.

158
159 Nicole Graves asked if the Missing Middle would affect affordable housing taxes, and
160 Devrie confirmed there are exemptions available for those units.

161
162 Joe Hegedus provided insight into funding, stating that while the county could request
163 the \$460,000 contribution, the upcoming budget was already in progress, so it may not
164 be feasible for this year. However, he committed to working toward securing the funding
165 in the future.

166
167 Joe also mentioned that staff were exploring alternative funding mechanisms, such as
168 local housing trust funds and a Housing Finance Authority, to address the funding gap.

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170 Trish Giaccone reiterated that it is never too early to ask for funding.

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174 **5. Public Comments: None**

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177 **6. Adjourn:** Trish Giaccone (Chair) motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Kim Carney seconded the
178 motion. All in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

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180 AHAC adjourned at 3:55 P.M.
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