

Affordable Housing Committee Meeting

March 7, 2024, Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Fred Hamilton called the meeting to order at 10:03 am.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Town Councilman/Chairman Fred Hamilton

Commissioner Grace Staples

Commissioner Doug Magill

Commissioner Gwen Chambers, entered at 10:07

Commissioner Denolis Polite, entered at 10:07

Kevin Icard, Director of Growth Management

Charlotte Moore, Principal Planner

Victoria Smalls, Workforce and Affordable Housing Manager

ABSENT

Town Councilman/Commissioner Dan Wood

Commissioner Meg James

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Motion for adoption made by Commissioner Magill, Seconded by Commissioner Staples.

Voting Yea: Chairman Hamilton, Commissioners Chambers and Polite.

IV. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Adoption of February 1, 2024, minutes.

Motion for adoption made by Commissioner Magill, Seconded by Commissioner Staples.

Voting Yea: Chairman Hamilton, Commissioners Chambers and Polite.

V. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Neighborhood Assistance Program Budget Update

The budget for Fiscal Year 2024 Neighborhood Assistance Budget was adopted at \$290,000. As of February 14, the updated budget is \$304,000.

To date, 17 homes have been serviced for home repairs such as roofing and interior repairs totaling \$269,000. Eighteen homes have been serviced for septic pump out totaling \$7,266, and two homes for tree service totaling \$6,180.

As of February 29, 2024, 37 homes have been serviced through the Neighborhood Assistance Program. Collectively, the program has a current balance of \$17,152.

Committee member Staples asked if the remaining budget would be enough to cover the remainder of the year; staff answered that homeowners needing immediate emergency repairs will be able to use the remaining funds.

Staff member Smalls let the committee know that Save the Shutters, a new nonprofit local group, is also willing to provide services to residents that may have bigger projects that the Town cannot take on. Committee member Chambers stated that the Beaufort County Black Chamber of Commerce also has a home repair program.

Smalls let the committee know that the Beaufort Jasper Housing Trust Fund has released a request for proposals from nonprofit organizations experienced in providing home repairs to lower income homeowners. These funds will be awarded to organizations on a competitive basis. Staff has applied for funds on behalf of the Neighborhood Assistance Program.

Chairman Hamilton asked if there is a dollar amount that each organization is allowed to receive? Staff answered yes, each organization can receive up to \$150,000 or \$9,000 per homeowner assisted. Those households assisted may not exceed 60% of the area median income.

Committee member Magill asked what is the average amount that we've been spending on home repairs. Smalls said she will let the committee know at the next meeting.

Committee member Staples asked how the Trust is funded. Staff members Smalls and Icard answered that the eight local municipalities deposit money

yearly based on their budget. There is a 10-year commitment from all the municipalities.

VII. DISCUSSION

1. 1095 May River Road Update, Kevin Icard, Director of Growth Management

Staff member Icard informed the committee of the Storm Water permit status. Beaufort Jasper Water and Sewer Authority and South Carolina Department of Transportation encroachment permits should be approved shortly. Once all permits have been approved, the Town can then schedule a pre-construction meeting. Icard let the committee know two street names and a development name are needed.

Chairman Hamilton asked Icard to please look into incentives for private landowners who are looking to build affordable housing on their own land. The numbers seem to be low and not profitable for landowners.

Committee member Magill asked if the Town has any possible future land purchases for affordable housing. Icard answered that the Town has land at 115 and 184 Bluffton Roads and land in Willow Run. There has been discussion on these projects but nothing that is ready to move forward. Icard stated that the Town just purchased 140 Buck Island Road for potential park space.

Committee member Chambers asked if there is a list of Town incentives; staff answered yes and will provide a link for her to view.

Committee member Staples asked how we are getting paperwork to interested homebuyers for 1095 May River Road townhomes. Icard answered that there is no application available at this time and that the developer of the project and Beaufort Housing Authority will handle all the applications and income verifications.

2. April Meeting Date Change

Due to scheduling, Chairman Hamilton requested a meeting date change for April. All committee members present voted yes to change the meeting date to Thursday, April 11, 2024.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Summer Nichols, Property Manager at Madison at New Riverside
Madison at New Riverside has 10 affordable units on their property. Nichols stated that she will be attending our monthly meetings to make sure they are following guidelines and are keeping up with all policies.

Chairman Hamilton asked what the AMI rates for the 10 units are, Nichols answered there are five units at 60% and five units at 80%. There is currently a waiting list of over 20 applicants. Madison has a total of 166 units. The average rate under affordable housing is significantly low right now but adjustments will be made to fit the HUD and Beaufort County listing. Right now, a one-bedroom unit is \$884, which is \$400 below the other housing units in this area.

Committee member Chambers asked if there are any other developers coming into the area that could possibly set aside affordable units. Staff member Icard answered that developers do not have to set aside units, but we are constantly encouraging developers to make their units affordable.

2. Shannon Greene, Town Employee

Greene has found and purchased her new home. And she is in the pre-closing stage which should be finalized in the next 45 to 60 days.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Hamilton adjourned the meeting at 10:43 am.