

Affordable Housing Committee Meeting

January 5, 2023, Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Fred Hamilton called the meeting to order at 10:01 am.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Town Councilman/Chairman Fred Hamilton

Town Councilman/Commissioner Dan Wood

Commissioner Grace Staples

Commissioner Meg James

Commissioner Denolis Polite

Victoria Smalls, Community Development Coordinator

Charlotte Moore, Principal Planner

ABSENT

Commissioner Gwen Chambers

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Motion for adoption made by Commissioner Staples Seconded by Commissioner James.

Voting Yea: Chairman Hamilton, Commissioner Wood, Commissioner Polite.

IV. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

December 1, 2022

Motion made by Commissioner Wood, Seconded by Commissioner Staples.

Voting Yea: Chairman Hamilton, Commissioner James, Commissioner Polite.

V. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Neighborhood Assistance Program Budget Update

The adopted budget for the FY23 Neighborhood Assistance Program is \$190,000.00.

As of December 21, 2022, 25 homes have been serviced for repairs such as roofing, wet and damaged floors and septic pump out totaling \$111,263.

For the Home Repair program, \$105,500 has been spent and \$36,033 has been encumbered for a total of \$141,533 of a \$150,000 budget and \$8,467 remains.

For the Property Cleanup and Septic Pump Out, \$4,633 has been spent and \$337 of a \$5,000 budget remains.

To date, five applications have been approved for repairs and are waiting on estimates. Two applications have been turned in and have not yet been approved by LCOG.

The committee made a recommendation to Town Council to amend the current FY spending by \$200,000. Town Council will review the request during the February meeting.

Committee member Wood asked what was the main method that residents are hearing about the program. Staff member Smalls answered that word of mouth, our local churches, our local soup kitchen, Bluffton Self Help and Goodwill have all been a big help in getting the word out. Chairman Hamilton asked if there was anything the committee could do to support staff. Staff member Smalls answered no, just to make sure that Town Council votes to amend the current budget. She added that staff is always looking for qualified contractors.

2. FY24 Neighborhood Assistance Program Budget Draft Recommendations to Town Council

Town staff is asking for a proposed budget of \$295,000 for the upcoming fiscal year 2024.

Staff is asking for an additional \$100,000 for home repairs totaling \$250,000, an additional \$5,000 for property clean and septic pump out totaling \$10,000.

Abatement/Demolition of unsafe structures will remain at \$15,000,

private road repair will remain at \$9,000

E911 addressing will remain at \$1,000 and

tree mitigation will remain at \$10,000.

Committee member Wood asked if Town grants are taking care of septic tanks that need to be cleaned out.

Staff answered that septic systems are being serviced through the Neighborhood Assistance Program. For residents that are requesting to tie into the sewer systems, Town grants are being used for that purpose through the engineering department.

Committee member Staples asked if a resident is not tied into the sewer system, can they seek help through the Town by filling out an application.

Chairman Hamilton answered yes, through the Town's grant program; if they qualify, the resident will receive assistance to get tied in.

Committee member Staples made a recommendation to accept the FY2024 budget as submitted. Committee member James second the motion and the motion passed.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Senator Tom Davis – South Carolina Legislator District 46, Beaufort & Jasper Counties
Senator Davis currently lives in Beaufort and is building a home in Bluffton. Senator Davis stated that he sees an opportunity to get an appropriation in the state budget for the Regional Housing Trust Fund. Senator Davis said he is aware of the need for workforce and affordable housing, and he also realizes the rent is out of sight.

Shannon Green – Works in Bluffton

Ms. Green stated that she works in Bluffton and would like to live in Bluffton. She wanted to find out if the mission of the board included addressing the price of apartment living.

Chairman Hamilton answered yes, our focus is to try to bring affordable housing to Bluffton.

There are many ideas that we are working on right now.

VIII. DISCUSSION**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Hamilton adjourned the meeting at 10:27 am.