

Affordable Housing Committee Meeting

September 7, 2023, Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Fred Hamilton called the meeting to order at 10:07 am.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Town Councilman/Chairman Fred Hamilton

Commissioner Dan Wood

Commissioner Grace Staples arrived at 10:11

Commissioner Doug Magill

Commissioner Gwen Chambers

Victoria Smalls, Workforce and Affordable Housing Manager

Charlotte Moore, Principal Planner

ABSENT

Commissioner Denolis Polite

Commissioner Meg James

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Motion for adoption made by Commissioner Magill, Seconded by Commissioner Chambers

Voting Yea: Chairman Hamilton, Commissioner Wood

IV. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

August 3, 2023

Motion made by Commissioner Wood, Seconded by Commissioner Magill

Voting Yea: Chairman Hamilton, Commissioner Chambers

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 has been approved at \$290,000.

To date, 13 homes have been serviced for home repairs such as roofing and interior repairs totaling \$115,840. Two homes have been serviced for septic pump out, totaling \$800 and one home for tree service totaling \$5,500. As of today, 16 homes have been serviced through the Neighborhood Assistance Program.

Four homes will be visited by staff to evaluate homes for repairs and five homes are waiting on estimates. Applications are still being accepted.

Committee member Chambers made a statement regarding the budget. We've already used half of the budget, but we may need to investigate other avenues to extend the budget to complete the fiscal year. Chambers mentioned partnering with Bluffton Self Help and Deep Well, and she asked if LCOG could also be a potential partner. Chairman Hamilton replied that while LCOG helped the Town with one project, its purpose is to serve individual homeowners.

Staff member Smalls let the committee know there is a scheduled meeting amongst other staff to figure out how to make the current budget work, being that more families know about the program and how to work with other agencies to offset rising cost of services.

Committee member Wood stated that he spoke with the Town Manager, who indicated that there are remaining funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Wood suggested the staff speak with the Town Manager about the leftover funds and where they would be placed.

Chairman Hamilton stated that before staff makes any changes to line items, the discussion should also be held with committee and staff agreed. Nothing will be changed to the policy or budget until the committee gives approval.

Chairman suggested that staff reach out to more contractors. Smalls let the committee know that she will be attending the next Quarterly Contractors' meeting to push for more contractors.

Committee member Chambers suggested speaking with Meg James to see what a basic roof repair should cost and get a baseline repair cost sheet.

Committee member Wood stated that we had a presenter from SC Housing give us information about federal funding for repair programs.

Staff has reached out to finance on their opinion of inquiring these funds and it was mentioned that those funds entail a lot of paperwork and monitoring. Staff has investigated this topic and is currently waiting for finance to respond, to see if there are any other avenues of federal funding that the Town could tap into.

Staff provided the committee with last year's spending; 58 families were serviced through the Neighborhood Assistance Program, spending \$337,000.

Staff stated that families are allowed to receive help from the program once per calendar year and several families are coming back yearly. Smalls also mentioned that the services we provide are mostly mobile home repairs. Smalls mentioned maybe we start looking at the age of the mobile home and track the families that we help year after year.

Chairman Hamilton suggested that we start looking at new applicants before we service those that have been helped the previous year.

Committee member Wood agreed that we stay focused on helping as many as we can and focus on new families that need help. The remainder of the committee agreed that we should prioritize new applicants.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

VIII. DISCUSSION

1. November meeting date change

There is a Strategic Planning meeting scheduled for our November date. The Committee agreed to moving the meeting to Thursday, November 9, 2023

2. 1095 May River Update

Staff provided an update on the project. Mentioned Development Review Committee meeting next week. Sign has been posted on property.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Hamilton adjourned the meeting at 10:27 am.