

Affordable Housing Committee Meeting

Theodore D. Washington Municipal Building, Henry “Emmett” McCracken Jr. Council Chambers, 20
Bridge Street, Bluffton, SC

December 04, 2025

This meeting can be viewed live on [BCTV](#), on Sparklight Channel 9 and 113 or on Spectrum Channel 1304.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Thursday, December 4, 2025, Affordable Housing Meeting was called to order at 10:02am by Chairman Hamilton.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Chairman Fred Hamilton

Councilwoman/Committee Member Emily Burden

Committee Member Gwen Chambers

Committee Member Meg James

Committee Member Veronica Navarro

ABSENT

Committee Member Denolis Polite

Committee Member Doug Magill

III. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. October 2, 2025

Motion made by Committee Member Chambers, Seconded by Committee Member Burden.

Voting Yea: Chair Hamilton, Committee Member Navarro

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Amanda Denmark, Pearce Scott Architects

Summer Nichols, Bristol at New Riverside

Jocelyn Steiger, Government Affairs Director, Hilton Head Area Realtors & Beaufort–Jasper County Realtors

Lucy Souls, The Elle Apartments

Michael Fries, Representing the Chamber of Commerce Leadership 2026 Class

V. OLD BUSINESS

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. FY26 Neighborhood Assistance Budget Update

The budget for the Neighborhood Assistance Program for FY 2026 was approved at \$450,000 by Town Council.

22 homes have received repairs this fiscal year and \$170,097 has been spent to date. Common repair services are roofing, flooring, decks, plumbing and tree service.

Staff reviews new applications weekly and coordinates visits with Building Safety.

Repair estimates are increasing, but staff remains focused on providing safe, decent, suitable living environments.

Four homes are waiting on estimates; two homes are pending income verification, and three new applications to be reviewed.

The available budget is just under \$280,000. Staff anticipates 7–8 additional homes scheduled for repair by February–March.

Many applicants are first-time participants, residents are learning of the program through word-of-mouth, churches, food pantries, and community members.

Beaufort - Jasper Housing Trust Fund has reopened funding to past recipients, and the Town has submitted a new application. Award notifications are expected between January–February.

The Town recently completed its fifth project with Save the Shutters. Save the Shutters provides materials through donations, and The Town funds the labor, creating a low-cost partnership. Save the Shutters is supported through the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry (501c3).

Save The Shutters receives offers of donated materials (vanities, countertops, toilets, etc.) but lacks a warehouse or storage area. The community occasionally lends garages, but a permanent solution is needed. Committee members suggested circulating the need for storage space.

Save the Shutters can handle some weatherization tasks the Town is not equipped for (window sealing, energy-loss issues). They can also do HVAC repairs or full replacements (Town currently cannot, but policy update is underway). Applicants must go through the Town first for income qualification.

Save The Shutters can fill gaps for repairs outside of the Town's scope and funding limits. Homeowners are not required to contribute financially.

Save The Shutters allows optional homeowner or community volunteer participation for tasks like painting, but for safety-sensitive work, licensed professionals are used.

2. Adoption of Affordable Housing Committee 2026 Meeting Dates

Motion made by Committee Member Navarro, Seconded by Committee Member Chambers.
Voting Yea: Chair Hamilton, Council Member Burden, Committee Member James

VII. DISCUSSION

1. Update on The May Housing Development

As of December 2:

Roadbeds are in.

Water and sewer are complete.

Waiting on Dominion Energy to run power cables; no confirmed date.

Sparklight will install telecom once Dominion is finished on site.

State of Mind LLC is finalizing property transfer details so the project can move to apply for building permits.

There is no confirmed timeline yet for when vertical construction (foundations/structures) will begin.

Committee members expressed frustration with delays but acknowledged visible progress on-site.

Homebuyer applications were intended to open closer to construction, but delays will affect the timing for mortgage readiness.

2. Workforce Housing Rental Units Update

The Elle Apartments have added units voluntarily at workforce pricing based on AMI.

Town staff's goal is to encourage more developments to establish workforce priced units.

Each unit will help local workers, hospitality staff, single individuals and families.

Concerns from Summer Nichols – Community Manager at Bristol at New Riverside:

Market-rate complexes offer concessions (e.g., 2 months free), bringing effective rent below workforce rates.

Example: Market unit \$1650 → w/ concessions become ~\$1375/month.

A workforce one-bedroom, \$1,472 making it more expensive than discounted market units.

Bristol initially underpriced their own workforce units due to outdated pricing (based on 2021 numbers).

The current concern is that workforce unit rates need to be reevaluated because some residents won't choose workforce units if equivalent market units are cheaper after concessions.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

IX. NEXT MEETING DATE: Thursday, January 8, 2026