

# Affordable Housing Committee Meeting

February 2, 2023, Minutes

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## I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Fred Hamilton called the meeting to order at 10:06 am.

## II. ROLL CALL

### PRESENT

Town Councilman/Chairman Fred Hamilton  
Commissioner Grace Staples  
Commissioner Meg James  
Commissioner Denolis Polite arrived at 10:07  
Stephen Steese, Town Manager  
Kevin Icard, Director of Growth Management  
Victoria Smalls, Community Development Coordinator  
Charlotte Moore, Principal Planner

### ABSENT

Commissioner Gwen Chambers  
Town Councilman/Commissioner Dan Wood

## III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Motion for adoption made by Commissioner Polite, Seconded by Commissioner Staples

Voting Yea: Chairman Hamilton, Commissioner James.

## IV. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

January 5, 2023

Motion made by Commissioner James, Seconded by Commissioner Staples.

Voting Yea: Chairman Hamilton, 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 January 26, 2023, a total of 39 homes have been serviced for home repairs such as roofing, wet and damaged floors and septic pump out totaling \$173,996.

For the Home Repair program, \$161,533 has been spent. On January 10, 2023, \$20,000 was placed into the affordable housing account for contingency. One invoice is waiting to be processed for \$355. Once paid the available home repair budget will be \$8,112.

For property cleanup and septic pump out, the line item has been exceeded by \$1,263. This shortfall will be covered by funds from the abatement/demolition line item. If Council approves additional funding at the February and March Town Council meetings funds for both line items will be restored.

To date, seven applications have been approved for repairs and are waiting on estimates. Five applications have been turned in and have not yet been income verified by Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG).

## **VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Shannon Green – Works in Bluffton

A month since she last spoke at AHC meeting, still very few apartments available. One complex went up \$100 in that time. Ms. Green made a suggestion of providing a list of complexes that offer affordable housing. Staples asked if she had reached out to private owners; Green responded that she had viewed Craig's List and had contacted some vacation rental owners. Staples suggested looking at Next Door. Hamilton said that sharing her experiences was important and mentioned things that Town was doing to try to improve housing. Polite added that having partnerships is necessary.

## **VIII. DISCUSSION**

### **1. 1095 May River Road Update, Stephen Steese, Town Manager**

Stephen Steese: Spoke about the 1095 May River Road project. He stated that questions have come up about maintenance of public spaces, such as roads and ponds. Typically an HOA covers all or some of these items, which may not be feasible for an affordable housing development if additional fees are added. The initial design of the project was shown and several people representing the building, landscape and architecture firms were introduced. Dan Keefer, who is doing the land design; Pearce Scott and Amanda Denmark, who are the architects; and Matt Lyle, who represents State of Mind Builders. Steese said the goal is for an owner-occupied community. The concern is whether the Town should take over roads, lagoons, greenspaces and sidewalks to assist with the affordability, and should affordability be extended for a longer time—possibly 40 years. Steese seeks input from AHC on both.

Committee member Polite: If a POA makes it unaffordable, there is no discussion. Asked if term of affordability can change—if it was 40 years, can it change to 30? Town Manager Steese said no, covenants would be recorded. Prefers to see affordability extended.

Committee member James: Asked who would verify qualifications. Town Manager Steese said builder and LCOG.

Committee member Staples: Mentioned living in Reston, VA and affordable housing complex where families grew up...now that covenants are running out, people are being forced out.

Town Manager Steese: Trying to balance public vs. private development.

Committee member James: Asked if Staff had anything ready to present to Council. Builder representative mentioned that he is contact with an expert to provide guidance. Suggested \$85,000 for road maintenance in the future, for example. Have idea that an additional \$200 per unit would be required.

Town Manager Steese: Mentioned concern that future residents could lose income, etc. and not be able to pay the maintenance fee. Homeowners would be responsible for individual units.

Town Manager Steese: Next step is to bring draft plans forward to Town Council.

Chairman Hamilton asked when numbers would be available. Matt mentioned the need to identify all the constraints and knowing if infrastructure can be approved.

Chairman Hamilton asked about time. The ownership of road issue is important to know first; feels like 90 days would be needed to have clearer details on site plans.

Chairman Hamilton: Recognized Save the Shutters program and work of Amanda and Pearce.

## **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Hamilton adjourned the meeting at 10:58 am.