

MINUTES
County of Volusia
Affordable Housing Advisory Committee
Thursday, September 25, 2008 3:00pm
Volusia County Health Department
1845 Holsonback Drive, Room 516A
Daytona Beach, Fl. 32120

Committee Members Present	Committee Members Absent	Staff
Frank Severino, Chair		Diana Phillips, Manager, Housing & Grants Administration
Richard Fraser, Vice Chair		Paula Szabo, Housing & Grants Planner
Janet Bellows		
Michelina Bowman		
William Hansard	Lynn Kaiser Conrad	
Tadd Kasbeer		
Deborah Michaud		
Sara Truhlar		
Richard Vincik		
Rosemary Walker		

The meeting of the Volusia County Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Frank Severino, Chair. Paula Szabo called the roll and a quorum was present.

Item 1- Approval of the minutes of the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee.

The minutes of the meetings of August 28, 2008 and September 11, 2008 were recommended for approval by motion and seconded, and adopted by unanimous vote.

The Chair informed the members that Lynn Kaiser Conrad submitted her resignation from the AHAC via e-mail. A motion to accept her resignation was made and seconded, and adopted by unanimous vote. Paula Szabo stated that Marcy Zimmerman, Deputy Clerk is handling the process of obtaining a replacement for this member's position.

Item 2 – Discussion of affordable housing incentive issue one - The processing of approvals of development orders or permits, as defined in s. 163.3164 (7) and (8), for affordable housing projects is expedited to a greater degree than other projects.

The Chair opened the floor for discussion. The Committee discussed the feasibility of recommending that the County implement an ombudsmen or special review committee for affordable housing projects. They also discussed that their recommendations assume that a process/criteria must be in place for determining that a project is “an affordable housing project.”

The committee also discussed self-certification of affordable housing used by the Community Assistance Division. Currently, a developer may self-certify that a minimum of 20% of the units in their proposed development will meet the criteria to be affordable. A copy of the Self-Certification application was distributed to the committee by staff.

After discussion, the Committee reached a consensus on the following elements of their recommendation for this issue:

- An affordable housing ombudsman should be established at the County level whose primary role would be to assist developers of affordable housing
- An affordable housing development checklist should be developed to assist developers understand the process, procedures, and requirements for affordable housing
- An affordable housing development timeline should be developed that addresses the standards for expediting approvals for development orders or permits for each stage of the development process (zoning, platting and building permits).
- The affordable housing development process should be enacted into the appropriate sections of the Volusia County zoning ordinance and land development code.
- The affordable housing development process should be promoted to the intended audience, and shared with the development community.

Item 3 – Discussion of recommendation regarding affordable housing incentive issue three - The allowance of flexibility in densities for affordable housing.

The Chair opened the floor for discussion. A discussion followed on the current status of density bonuses in Volusia County for affordable housing development. The committee reviewed the density bonuses for affordable housing that are allowed under the County's Comprehensive Plan, and agreed that they are generous. However, a developer has to use the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process to access the bonus, which involves public hearings before the County Council to obtain them. The PUD process increases the project's timeline and allows opportunity for objections to the project based on its nature as "affordable housing."

Tadd Kasbeer suggested that the Committee recommend that the cluster subdivision rules be modified to allow increases in density, and other zoning flexibility, for affordable housing projects. Presently, cluster subdivisions are allowed as a matter of right in order to provide common open space and/or preserve environmentally sensitive areas, but do not permit density increases. Sara Truhlar suggested that other jurisdictions had set a percentage of affordable housing units that must be created in order to trigger the density bonus, or other zoning and land use flexibilities, and recommended that the committee set a percentage.

After discussion, the Committee reached a consensus on the following elements of their recommendation for this issue:

- The County's density bonus in the Comprehensive Plan provides a generous density bonus for affordable housing.
- In addition to using the PUD process in the Comprehensive Plan to access the density bonuses, the cluster subdivision rules should be modified for single family and multi-family units to allow increases in density for affordable housing.
- The committee should recommend a formula that would be used to support a request for a density bonus as part of the modified cluster subdivision rules or the PUD process.
- All of the various affordable housing incentives should come under one ordinance.

Item 4 – Discussion of recommendation regarding affordable housing incentive issue four – The reservation of infrastructure capacity for housing for very-low income persons, low-income persons, and moderate-income persons.

The Chair opened the floor for discussion. Rosemary Walker noted that staff had previously reported that infrastructure capacity was not an issue for unincorporated Volusia County. However, in her experience water capacity is beginning to be an issue now, and will continue to present an issue in the future.

After discussion, the Committee reached a consensus on the following element of their recommendation for this issue:

- The committee should monitor the capacity of water, and address in the future as necessary.

Item 5 – Discussion of recommendation regarding affordable housing incentive issue five - The allowance of affordable accessory residential units in residential zoning districts.

The Chair opened the floor for discussion. Richard Vincik stated that he had several examples of affordable housing ordinances and materials from other jurisdictions that addressed this issue, and requested staff to distribute to the committee. The committee discussed that the County currently has a fairly broad ordinance regarding accessory dwelling units but that the special exception process requires hearings before the Planning & Land Development Regulation Committee (PLDRC) and County Council.

The Chair recommended that the committee review the materials to be provided by staff and discuss further at the next meeting before formalizing a recommendation on this issue.

Item 6 – Discussion of recommendation regarding affordable housing incentive issue seven - The allowance of flexible lot configurations, including zero-lot-line configurations for affordable housing.

The Chair opened the floor for discussion. A discussion followed on incorporating the zero-lot line concept into the cluster subdivision rules for affordable housing. The committee also discussed the County's Comprehensive Plan administrative rule that required combining of non-conforming lots that become owned by a single owner into one lot. This rule can work a hardship and be detrimental to creating affordable housing.

The Chair recommended that the committee review the materials discussed and those to be provided by staff and discuss further at the next meeting before formalizing a recommendation on this issue.

Item 7 – Discussion of recommendation regarding affordable housing incentive issue ten – The preparation of a printed inventory of locally owned public lands suitable for affordable housing.

The Chair opened the floor for discussion. A discussion followed regarding the County's Land Management Division's current process for tracking locally owned public lands, and preparing an inventory. The committee agreed that the County has a process, but that the process should be more defined and open to the public.

After discussion, the Committee reached a consensus on the following elements of their recommendation for this issue:

- A written policy should be developed by the County that describes the procedures, standards and timeframes for the preparation of the printed inventory.
- The policy should include the determination of what constitutes public land that is "suitable for affordable housing."
- The printed inventory should be prepared annually and be made available to the development community.

Public Participation

The Chair opened the floor to public comment. There being no public comment, the Chair closed the item to discussion.

Discussion by committee members of matters not on the agenda.

The committee discussed the proposed meeting schedule (attached to these minutes), and the desirability of holding the next meeting, and the meeting of October 30th at the Volusia County Health Department, but that the meeting on October 23rd should be held in the County Council Chambers to facilitate staff reporting on issues remaining.

Items for staff discussion.

Staff agreed that they would provide a similar overview (prior recommendation and current status) of the remaining affordable housing incentive issues in advance of the meeting on October 23rd so that the committee had more time to familiarize themselves with the issues.

Adjournment

With no further matters, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:25.