

CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP MEETING

February 1, 2021

4:30 pm

This Commission Meeting was conducted utilizing Communications Media Technology. Some Staff members were present in the Commission Chambers while others were present via the Zoom application to respect the social distancing guidelines.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:

Shirley Groover Bryant, Mayor

Brian Williams, Vice Mayor, Commissioner, Ward 3

Sheldon Jones, Commissioner-at-Large 1

Harold Smith, Commissioner, Ward 1

Tambra Varnadore, Commissioner, Ward 2 (Entered the meeting at 4:41 p.m.)

Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner-at-Large 2

STAFF PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:

Mark Barnebey, City Attorney

Mohammed Rayan, Public Works Director

Scott Tyler, Chief of Police

Jim Freeman, City Clerk

Jeff Burton, CRA Director

Zachary Swartz, Senior GIS Analyst

Penny Johnston, Executive Assistant

Vanessa Cochran, Assistant City Clerk

STAFF PRESENT ELECTRONICALLY:

Todd Williams, Information Technology (IT) Consultant

Mayor Bryant called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

1. AFFORDABLE HOUSING ANALYSIS (J. Burton/Z. Schwartz)

Mr. Burton, CRA Director, summarized what would be discussed regarding the Affordable Housing Analysis and introduced Zachary Swartz, Senior GIS Analyst, who gave the presentation to the Commission. A copy of the presentation is a part of the minutes. The presentation included the techniques that were utilized to support the 30% total housing/living units that are affordable in Palmetto. Mr. Swartz collected data from the Census, the Property Appraiser's Office, and the mobile home parks to support his results. He also informed the Board that the City's Comprehensive Plan specifies that the levels of affordable housing for the existing and projected residents of very low, low, and moderate income households should be monitored annually.

Mayor Bryant asked about the appropriate procedure in pursuing funding for affordable housing. Mr. Burton responded that the financing for housing comes from the Federal and State levels. And, the Florida Housing Coalition, which the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is a member, offers training on how to apply for these grants and what to expect. He expressed that these funding sources generally use the census data.

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Commissioner Smith inquired about the City's Housing Authority, and requested how to restart and fund it. Mr. Burton replied that the funding could be done locally, federally, or by the state. And, the CRA Board will have to make a decision on how to activate the Housing Authority, which can be done by a loan from the CRA, and the CRA Plan will have to be updated to include this. Also, the City Attorney can assist with the process.

Commissioner Williams acknowledged that the Housing Authority is needed and commented that the biggest factor is the funding. He inquired if the CRA loans money to the Housing Authority, would it affect the City's Incentive Programs and others. And, would the Board have any control over how the Housing Authority applies the funding. Mr. Burton replied that he will bring back information to the Commission on how it would affect the City's programs. Regarding the funding, he emphasized that this would be loan, so the CRA Plan must include what is being done and given, and if it helps accomplish the Plan. In addition, a contract is executed, and audits are done.

Mr. Swartz explained the Parcel Level and the Census Block Group and identified Palmetto's affordable housing demographic locations. He announced that the estimated income for the area households are from \$30,000 to \$40,000.

Mr. Burton reiterated that when conversing with financial entities about housing, the City needs to identify and use the data they use when applying for grants. Also, Mr. Swartz stated that the City is around 30% affordable housing based on the City's definition, and the mobile home parks do not make a significant difference including them or not. The City's Comprehensive Plan states the minimum should be 15%, and it does not give a maximum. The CRA will meet with the Housing Coalition to make sure that the City's definition is the appropriate one to use. If not, we need to amend it. And, an updated analysis on the CRA cash flow will be presented to the Board.

Commissioner Cornwell stated that the presentation has Palmetto at 30% where we need to be for affordable housing, so Palmetto may not need a Housing Authority. She suggested to use the CRA funding instead for the blighted homes in the City. Mr. Burton commented that we need to meet with others in the Affordable Housing industry that will assist us in defining the best definition for affordable housing for the City. Then, we will bring back a new analysis that will include the type of affordable housing and how much money to loan. Mr. Swartz informed the Board that the flood zones areas have to be taken in consideration too because it could raise ownership cost.

Commissioner Jones inquired about the next Workshop Meeting for Affordable Housing. MR. Burton replied probably within 60 days.

Commissioner Varnadore asked the status of the Housing Authority since it had been established at one time. Commissioner Varnadore agreed with Commissioner Cornwell that Palmetto don't need affordable housing based on the analysis presented.

Commissioner Smith opined that the City do not have affordable homes and asked if the analysis was based on price. Mr. Swartz replied that it is based on cost and income. Commissioner Smith expressed that the Board has to make a move and work with Mr. Burton, who can get it accomplished.

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Commissioner Williams questioned the sea levels rise. Mr. Swartz knows of a sea level website and will send the address to the Board to review.

Commissioner Jones commented that the City has a Housing Authority, but it is out of compliance. He requested that Mayor Bryant reappoint the Board and move forward. Mr. Burton stated that he will review the archives files and get back to the Board.

Mayor Bryant pointed out that more information is required, and the last board was not able to obtain funds, and she will designate someone to handle it.

2. RIVERSIDE PROPERTY DISCUSSION (J. Burton)

Due to the time, this item will be scheduled for another Workshop Meeting.

3. DOWNTOWN PARKING DISCUSSION (J. Burton)

Due to the time, this item will be scheduled for another Workshop Meeting.

Mayor Bryant adjourned the meeting at 5:55 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED: MARCH 22, 2021

JAMES R. FREEMAN

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CITY CLERK