



AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AHAC)

AGENDA

**Wednesday, March 13, 2024 - 6:00 P.M.
via Teams**

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

III. Pledge of Allegiance (Optional)

IV. Approval of Minutes of January 10, 2024, Meeting

V. Update

- Expanding the scope of the AHAC Committee / Request for staff to work on Homeownership campaign for North Miami residents and/or prospective residents.
- Comprehensive Plan (Updated by Derrick Cook, Assistant Director of Development Services Department)

VI. New Business

- Overview of “Density Flexibility” by Derrick Cook, Assistant Director of Development Services Department
- Presentation of Live Local Act
- Committee Discussion about “Density Flexibility”

VII. Upcoming Target Dates

AHAC Meeting (Incentive Strategies Discussion)	May 8, 2024
AHAC Meeting (1 st Draft)	July 10, 2024
AHAC Meeting (Final Draft)	September 11, 2024
Public Hearing Ad to go out	October 22, 2024
Public Hearing for AHAC Report Adoption	November 13, 2024
Adoption of AHAC Report to City Council	December 10, 2024
AHAC Report to FHFC	December 13, 2024

X. Adjournment



AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AHAC)

MEMBERS

- 1. Andrea McDonald (AD)**
- 2. Lola Capers (AD)**
- 3. Evan Shields (SG)**
- 4. Ebonni Chrispin (SG)**
- 5. Nikisha Williams (KT)**
- 6. Marie-Frantz Jean-Pharuns (KT)**
- 7. Michael McDearmaid (MEI)**
- 8. Naomi Blemur (MEI)**
- 9. Edwige Clark (PFC)**
- 10. Guerda Theodore (PFC)**
- 11. Honorable Councilwoman Kassandra Timothe (Elected Official)**

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COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
January 10, 2024 – 6:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

Committee Members	Present	Absent
Evan Shields	X	
Naomi Blemur	X	
Ebonni Chrispin		X
Marie-Frantz Jean-Pharuns	X	
Andrea McDonald	X	
Honorable Councilwoman Kassandra Timothe	X	
Nikisha Williams		X
Michael McDearmaid		X
Lola Capers	X	
Guerda Theodore	X	
Edwige Clark	X	

Staff present: Alberte Bazile, MBA, Housing & Social Services Director

Meeting Opening

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m. Eastern. The meeting opened with a roll call, led by Secretary McDonald.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Shields confirmed that the minutes from the November 16, 2023, meeting were circulated to the committee. The Chairman then entertained a motion for the approval of these minutes. The motion was moved by Secretary McDonald and seconded by committee member Blemur. All were in favor. The motion carried.

Old Business

The Chairman asked for updates on the submittal of the 2023 incentive strategies recommendations to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) and the City Council's adoption of these strategies. Director Bazile confirmed that the package was submitted to FHFC after the November 16th meeting. Then, on December 14, 2023, the package was brought before City Council and Councilwoman Timothe provided an update to council's members and highlighted the work done by the AHAC over the year. The recommendations were then approved unanimously by the council on December 14, 2023. This Council resolution was then forwarded to the FHFC thereafter. Regarding the LHAP, given that most strategies remained unchanged, there was no update to the LHAP report.

Chairman Shields commended the team on completing the required reports with recommendations. Also, going forward, the Chairman indicated he would like to see the committee review additional ways to encourage and improve access to affordable home ownership in North Miami. He shared that he would like to see the committee members tap more into their leadership skills and broaden the scope of work for the committee going forward.

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New Business

Changing meeting platform from Zoom to MS Teams: Zoom – Director Bazile shared that the City of North Miami was in the process of making a shift from the Zoom platform to the Microsoft Teams platform. As such, it was imperative to understand any potential compatibility issues for the committee members. Committee member Blemur indicated that she would be willing to make the platform shift to Microsoft Teams, once there is no cost associated with it. Chairman Shields chimed in to indicate that he has been using Microsoft Teams for over three (3) years and there is no cost associated with using the platform. Director Bazile asked if committee members would need to download anything to be able to use the platform. Chairman Shields shared that committee members may need to download the Microsoft Teams app on their phones to join meetings from their phones. Microsoft Teams also allows users to call into meetings directly without downloading the app. This call-in feature may not display names, however. For persons with Microsoft computers, the Teams app is already downloaded. The Chairman shared that the Microsoft Teams platform was not as easy to use as Zoom, however, he was supportive of the City's decision to switch to the platform, for security or financial reasons.

Director Bazile indicated that currently the Zoom platform is a paid service, and the city has Microsoft Teams available as an alternative meeting platform. Therefore, switching would lead to some savings. As a trial, Director Bazile asked that the next meeting be done via MS Teams for committee members to get acquainted with the platform.

Density Flexibility – Chairman Shields indicated that the committee had two options on how to move forward with the discussion of density flexibility.

- Option 1: reinvigorate the previously created subcommittee, request that they meet and discuss in January and February and come back to the March AHAC meeting with a specific set of recommendations, like how the land bank/community land trust subcommittee did it.
- Option 2: discuss it within the whole AHAC committee over the next couple of meetings, then draft recommendations in July

Committee members agreed to option 2 – discuss the topic together as a group. The Chairman asked staff members for an update on the options available regarding density flexibility.

Director Bazile indicated that she would invite City Planner Debbie Love to the next AHAC meeting (March 13, 2024) to provide a broader perspective on Density Flexibility. Both Director Bazile and committee member Jean-Pharuns believed that the City Planner should be able to guide the team on what can be done and possibly how it can be achieved, especially in relation to the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan. Committee member Jean-Pharuns agreed, indicating that City Planner Debbie Love started sharing guidance initially with the sub-committee last year.

Chairman Shields indicated that the Florida Housing Finance Corporation provides a AHAC guide policy memo on density flexibility on its website. This document shares several policies related to density flexibility, as well as case studies from other cities, such as Clearwater and Orlando.

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Chairman Shields suggested that this document be shared with the committee before the March meeting, along with the Comprehensive Plan adopted last year. Committee members agreed to this strategy. The FHFC policy memo outlines potential strategies around density bonus such as:

- How much of a density bonus the city could give.
- The affordability brackets that the city could target.
- Will bonuses be given for only certain Area Median Income brackets.
- Additional items that can be given flexibility, by offsetting certain costs
- The possibility of factoring land donation into density flexibility

The Chairman asked that committee members review the policy memo and think about at least one strategy before the next meeting that the City could use. There are a number of things that can be done through the density flexibility strategy, so it would be good for the team to better understand it, before making suggestions.

Expanding the scope of the AHAC – Chairman Shields shared that following the November 16th meeting, it may be good for committee members to expand their reach into the community. He mentioned possibly using their personal platforms and a variety of methods, such as:

- Getting the word out
- Further engaging the community
- Exploring other policies outside of the incentive strategies discussed previously.

Chairman Shields also suggested that committee members pick one or two additional initiatives, that could be spearheaded by the team, beyond the scope of the current incentive strategies. After choosing additional initiatives, the Chairman would like the team to develop strategies for achievement of the strategies. These strategies may include education on affordable home ownership, classes and programs available through the city and county, home downpayment assistance, securing the best debt for homeowners, understanding insurance, etc. The team could also consider engaging the community on affordable housing options.

Committee member Blemur concurred that the idea of an additional initiative is timely. She indicated that Councilwoman Timothe will be having a community event soon. Committee member Blemur suggested that the team could come together to make the event stronger by working in conjunction with the Councilwoman. Chairman Shields requested additional information on the event. Councilwoman Timothe then shared a few events and their dates with the team:

- January 13 – ERCC will be having an 8-hour 1st time homebuyers' class.
- January 30/31 – Housing Fair
- February 10 – Homebuyer workshop

Chairman Shields asked committee members to share ideas around what can be done around these events. Possibly, committee members could offer support or attend the events to learn about the actual processes.

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Committee member Blemur suggested that committee members do both. Also, at the last meeting, it was mentioned that there may be some great programs that are not well publicized in the city and many persons are not empowered to use already available resources to prepare.

Committee Member Jean-Pharuns shared that April is Affordable and Fair Housing month. She suggested that the committee gathers information and make plans to celebrate in April.

Councilwoman Timothe sent information via chat that the events on January 31st and February 10th were being hosted by the Councilwoman's office, with city staff in attendance. The Councilwoman offered a cohosting opportunity to the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee for the two events. The chairman welcomed the idea. Committee member Blemur agreed with the idea.

Chairman Shields suggested that the committee gather a list of all activities on affordable housing going on in the City and explore how the AHAC could expand the reach these activities.

Committee member Blemur asked about the city's housing calendar, highlighting annual activities at the beginning of each year. She inquired whether there were specific initiatives that the department of Housing and Social Services pay attention to. She also expressed that April may be a bit too late to kick a program off.

Director Bazile shared that in the 1st quarter of the fiscal year, the department usually focuses on reopening all its programs - most of these programs are housing rehabilitation and short-term rentals. The focus of the 2nd quarter is usually project implementation. The 3rd quarter usually begins in April and is the Housing team usually focuses on Fair housing, in celebration of Fair Housing month. Throughout the year, the Housing department collaborates with Councilwoman Timothe to have 2 homebuyer classes per month.

The team utilizes various platforms for advertising, including social media, and radio. These advertisements target ethnicities and racial groups. Director Bazile shared that she is open to exploring additional avenues to educate and share information with the community. Director Bazile shared that many low-middle income persons sometimes reach out about the homebuyer process, with no knowledge of the preliminary steps involved. She indicated that her team would be fully onboard to collaborate with the AHAC and Councilwoman to expand knowledge about these programs.

Based on the discussion, committee member Blemur proposed a theme 'Own in NOMI' as the focus for the rest of the year. She also proposed that the committee participate in the two upcoming events being held by Councilwoman Timothe, as well as other events being put on by agencies such as NACA. Committee member Blemur suggested having a calendar of events for the first quarter listing all the relevant events for persons who wish to own in the City of North Miami. In the following quarters, the AHAC could start adding its own initiatives to the existing list of activities/programs being done in the community towards affordable housing. Committee member Blemur also suggested that the committee sets targets / objectives for itself annually. The Chairman

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expressed support for these ideas. These quarterly marketing efforts could empower the community regarding affordable housing. Attending these events, co-sponsoring or co-hosting may also be possibilities. The Chairman requested that staff conduct some research and collate information on current homeownership levels in the City of North Miami. Chairman Shields suggested that this information then be used in the March meeting to set possibly 3-5 year goals.

In response to this idea, Director Bazile shared the current quarterly newsletter published by the Housing and Social Services department. Director Bazile shared her willingness to add some of the ideas shared by committee member Blemur and the Chairman or to assist with standalone advertisement initiatives, if the committee so desires.

Chairman Shields expressed that the team may need to create a vision behind the ‘Own in Nomi’ initiative. This would also need a marketing framework, such as Instagram videos or shorts showcasing community engagements or committee members attending affordable housing events. Committee member Capers agreed that the flyer idea was great, but many persons are currently on Section 8 housing and uneducated on how to use these vouchers to become homeowners. Chairman and committee member Blemur chimed in that this could be one of the areas explored this year. Committee member Blemur asked committee member Capers if she could share contacts for persons in this sub-industry who could potentially share information at the upcoming training and seminars. Committee member Blemur also asked Councilwoman Timothe if there was any room on her February 10th workshop for an expert from this sub-industry to share information on the topic of Section 8 Housing Voucher. Councilwoman Timothe indicated that the January 31st event would be better suited for a discussion of Section 8, given that the February 10th event is geared mostly towards homebuyers. Committee member Blemur then asked committee member Capers to reach out to Director Bazile to start the process to have an expert discuss Section 8 Housing Voucher at the January 31st event. Committee member Capers committed to reaching out to HUD for an expert.

Committee member Lola Capers inquired about the Section 8 program. Director Bazile shared that the City of North Miami does not participate in the Section 8 program, however interested persons are referred to the Miami-Dade Public Housing Authority for further assistance. A portion of the City’s funds is set aside for homeownership assistance. Committee member Capers then asked about the City’s participation in federal funding tax credit dollars in order to make renting and homeownership affordable. The Chairman shared that from his personal knowledge these funds are passed from the State to the Counties, and this does not seem to be a funding strategy being used by the City. Committee member Capers indicated that tax credit dollars could be used by developers to reduce costs, however, she is not aware of any developers who use this avenue.

Regarding branding, committee member Blemur asked Director Bazile about the time needed by the city’s marketing team to create a concept for the committee. Director Bazile shared that the marketing team is limited by resources, and as such, it may take a week or two to produce a full concept. Committee member Blemur suggested using a google doc to facilitate easy collaboration among committee members for the first publication (flyer). The Chairman agreed with this suggestion. Committee members may chime in with their suggestions for the flyer using the

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Google docs. Committee member Blemur took ownership of this sub-project and committed to starting the Google doc and sharing with Director Bazile for the team to collate their ideas within 72 hours. The Chairman asked that the timeline be changed to close of business on Friday. The document will then be submitted to the marketing department for concept creation.

In closing, Chairman Shields asked that the Housing department pull the Flexibility and Density strategy from the FHFC policy memo and disseminate to the AHAC. The Chairman reiterated his request that each committee member reviews this policy memo and bring at least one idea on the topic to the March 13th meeting.

Other Business

Tentative meeting dates for the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee in 2024 are as follows:

March 13, 2024

May 8, 2024

July 10, 2024

September 11, 2024

Upcoming Target Dates

AHAC meeting (Incentive Strategies Discussion Cont'd)	May 8, 2024
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Next Meeting

March 13, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. (**Virtual via Microsoft Teams**).

Adjournment

There being no further business, the Chairman entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Secretary McDonald moved the motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by committee member Blemur. All were in favor. The meeting was properly adjourned at 7:10 p.m. Eastern.

Submitted by:

E-SIGNED by Andrea McDonald
on 2024-03-05 21:59:13 GMT

Andrea McDonald, Committee Secretary

ATTEST:

E-SIGNED by Evan Shields
on 2024-03-05 23:17:35 GMT

Evan Shields, Chairperson