

New Hanover County-City of Wilmington Workforce Housing Advisory Committee October 16, 2019 Initial Meeting

Committee Members Present: Shamonique Brantley, Evelyn Bryant, Brandon Harris, Don Harris, Katrina Knight, Richard Moore, Katrina Redmon, Steve Spain, David Spetrino, Paul Stavovy, Glenda Tate

Staff Present: Tufanna Bradley-Thomas (NHC), Wayne Clark (NHC), Chris Coudriet (NHC), Glenn Harbeck (CoW), Rachel LaCoe (CoW), Kate Oelslager (NHC), Suzanne Rogers (CoW), Rebekah Roth (NHC)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 pm when New Hanover County Senior Planner Rebekah Roth welcomed the committee to the initial meeting. Ms. Roth introduced the City of Wilmington Community Development and Housing Planner, Suzanne Rogers, who would be the co-facilitator for the board orientation portion of the afternoon's meeting. She also recognized other county and city staff in attendance: Wayne Clark, NHC Planning Director; Tufanna Bradley-Thomas, NHC Assistant Manager; Glenn Harbeck, City of Wilmington Director of Planning, Development, and Transportation; and Rachel LaCoe, City of Wilmington Community Development Specialist.

Board Orientation

Ms. Rogers began the meeting by facilitating an introduction activity for the committee members. Each committee member provided an overview of how they would define the committee's success by the end of the first year.

Common themes included a focus on innovation, fresh approaches, and being a model for other communities; closing the gap between income and housing costs; and a desire to support the housing needs of all residents regardless of demographics or income levels.

Specific goals committee members identified included:

- a dedicated housing trust fund for both the city and county,
- a focus on affordable rental and a local approach,
- highlighting the efforts of the groups/parties already working to solve the issue,
- establishing a common language for talking about housing affordability,
- identifying opportunities and market gaps that the private market could fill,
- changing regulations that limit accessory dwelling units,
- delineating the pathway to home ownership,
- developing something the community will buy into to reduce the likelihood of not-in-my-backyard responses;
- creating stability in housing for current residents, and

- providing housing that's affordable where people want to live and making sure people want to live where housing is already affordable.

Ms. Rogers then provided a brief overview of the history of housing practices and policy, including the formation of the City of Wilmington/New Hanover County Ad Hoc Committee on Improving Workforce/Affordable Housing in 2016. She highlighted the recommendations the committee made to the governing boards of the city and county, including those that led to the creation of the Workforce Housing Advisory Committee in spring 2019.

Ms. Roth provided an overview of the purpose for the committee outlined in the bylaws established by the governing boards, namely, to develop a comprehensive workforce housing study, workforce housing opinion survey, and public awareness campaign; to support increasing equitable access and the supply of workforce housing that is affordable; to inform the city and county boards and other organizations of findings; and to make recommendations in an advisory capacity. The committee discussed how "workforce housing" was outlined in the interlocal agreement between the boards as being generally between 60% and 120% of area median income and how that might affect the scope of the study.

Ms. Roth then presented a tentative timeline for the remainder of 2019 and for 2020 that would allow for the development of the study, survey, public awareness campaign, and work plan detailed in the committee's bylaws. After a discussion regarding the proposed timeline for the development of an RFP for the study, the committee requested that staff provide them with background material on other comprehensive housing studies and the RFPs that led to them before the next committee meeting. It was determined that this background information would be discussed at the next meeting along with some options for draft RFP language, as it was the board's consensus that the quality of the RFP and resulting study would be of primary importance in getting the data needed to make future decisions.

The committee also determined that during the timeframe that the study was being completed, it would be important to identify other work that could be accomplished in the shorter term in order to capitalize on the current momentum around the issue of housing affordability and to have a measurable outcome by the end of the first year.

Ms. Roth presented the staff recommendation to establish a regular, monthly meeting, and the committee concurred that they would like to meet more than quarterly in order to achieve their goals. Ms. Roth provided an overview of some meeting date alternatives that staff had prepared after receiving information from committee members and staff on ongoing commitments and conflicts.

Election of Officers

Ms. Rogers facilitated the election of officers, and after a discussion regarding the availability of members of the committee and the most appropriate spokesperson for the group, Dave Spetrino nominated Evelyn Bryant as chairperson. Ms. Bryant accepted the nomination, Glenda Tate made the official motion to name her chairperson, which was seconded by Mr. Spetrino, and adopted unanimously by the committee.

Ms. Tate then made a motion to elect Mr. Spetrino as vice-chairperson, which was seconded by Don Harris, and adopted unanimously by the committee.

Meeting Procedures

After Chairperson Bryant introduced the draft meeting guidelines and public comment guidelines included the committee's packet, Mr. D. Harris made a motion to approve them as presented, which was seconded by Ms. Tate, and adopted unanimously by the committee.

Regular Meeting Date and Time

After reviewing the staff-prepared meeting date and time alternatives, Mr. Spetrino made a motion to adopt the first Wednesday of each month at 3 pm as the regular meeting date and time for 2020, except for January and July, which was seconded by Brandon Harris, and adopted unanimously by the committee.

The board then discussed a meeting date and time for December 2019. Mr. Spetrino made a motion to schedule the meeting for December 16, 2019 at 3 pm in a location to be determined, which was seconded by Richard Moore, and adopted unanimously by the committee.

Questions/Comments

Chairperson Bryant asked if anyone had additional questions or comments, and Ms. Roth asked if there were any resources or changes to the meeting set-up that the committee would like. After a request for the RFP background information to be provided as soon as possible, Ms. Roth indicated that she would send out some information by the end of October and would send the staff packet to the committee the week before the December meeting.

Paul Stavovy reiterated an earlier comment made during the discussion about the workforce housing focus of the committee regarding the need to expand the committee scope to support housing affordable for all residents of the county.

Adjournment

With no further questions or comments, the meeting was adjourned by 4:45 PM.