

**Minutes of the Affordable Housing Council (AHC) Meeting  
Tuesday, March 10, 2020**

2:30 pm to 4:00 pm

Citizens Services Division Building – Main Conference Room  
401 Sagner Avenue, Frederick, MD 21701

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**Call to Order:** Kimberly Ashkenazi, Chair called the meeting to order at 2:33 P.M. and welcomed everyone.

**Members Present:** Kimberly Ashkenazi, Chair; Mark Long, Vice-Chair; Marva Younger, Secretary; Kandy Alexander; Diane Bill; Linda Duckett; Hugh Gordon; Mary Ellen Mitchell; Malcolm Furgol; and Bruce Zavos.

**Absent:** Angie Liddiard; Patricia Galloway; and Jason Wiley.

**Public Officials/Staff Liaisons Present:** Jessica Fitzwater, County Council; Derek Shackelford, City Alderman; Marc DeOcampo, Chief Administrative Officer for the Mayor's Office; Milton Bailey, Director, DHCD; and (Ryan Trout, DHCD on the telephone).

**Visitors Present:** Ron Cramer, Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity; Roger Sobkowiak, Human Relations Commission; James Baker, Frederick Housing Authority; Theresa Wyatt, citizen; Jodie Ostoich, IHA; Diana Fulchim, Community Foundation; Robin Inskeep, Frederick County Finance; Maria Herrera, Spanish Speaking Community; and Kara Norman, Downtown Frederick Partnership.

**Minutes of February 11:** The minutes were tabled until the next meeting to correct notation on the *Maryland State Housing Needs Assessment*.

**Agenda was approved:** Mark moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Diane and unanimously approved.

**Public Comment:** None

**Presentation – Ron Cramer, Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity** – The Frederick County is affiliated with Habitat for Humanity at the National and International levels. The organization looks for locations to build multi-family units which are less costly per unit, a quicker and effective rate of building with universal design for wheelchair accessibility for persons living within or for visitors. A grant from the State of Maryland has been acquired to purchase property on West All Saints Street and it has been put into a land trust. Approximately 10-12 units located at 100-108 West All Saints Street will be built in partnership with the Asbury Church to redevelop and revitalize the neighborhood. These properties have been vacant for over 20 years. Habitat for Humanity will also help the church to obtain a contract for their planned daycare center in the church. The organization is looking for other properties and partnerships in Frederick County. The Discovery Community in Walkersville is also being revitalized to include a playground. Home repairs for aging in place are a top priority such as grab bars, fit tub units, ramps,

handrails, raised toilets, tub cuts, porches, roofing, painting, etc. Habitat for Humanity International has introduced a program called, “cost per home”, to engage with affiliates every two weeks to advocate for teaching, on-line information, and ways to make homes affordable. Chesapeake and Frederick are working together to create a bank in the State of Maryland for all Habitat for Humanity entities to acquire a zero percent mortgage rate.

**Frederick Community Action Agency (FCAA) Vision – Marc DeOcampo, Chief Administrative Officer for the Mayor’s Office** – Marc will be a regular attendee to the AHC representing the Mayor’s Office. The two new divisions created under FCCA are Human Services (community action, food bank, health clinic, school base and nutrition, and shelter); and Housing (community development, weatherization program, home energy, MPDU, and housing council). A national search for the director of FCAA will oversee Human Services and Housing. A search committee consisting of two boards will review applications and make a recommendation to the Mayor and eventually to the Board of Aldermen. This process may take several months but hopefully, someone will be hired by late summer. Once the director is on board, the managerial positions for these two divisions will be filled.

Marc also responded to question about the City of Frederick buying homes. He stated that the Community Development Block Grant unallocated funds would be used to buy property to help fulfill the need for more affordable housing. These homes will be moderately priced and sold to qualified families through a lottery process and required to take a homebuyer education course. Derek noted that this initiative would be discussed in detail at Wednesday’s workshop.

**AHC Reserve Fund (\$100,000)**– Kimberly, Mark and Mary Ellen met with the Mayor to inquire how to move forward with the grant. Mark distributed a report prepared by Dr. Joyce A. Heptner with suggested criteria for awarding the grant. Since this grant is not tied to this fiscal year, it might be appropriate to wait for the new director of FCAA is hired to administer this grant. The recommendations remain the same, but allocations have been rearranged as noted below.

- Co-host the June Bloom Housing Fair -- \$5,000 (no change to the allocation),
- Marketing Projects 1) rack cards and 2) promotional video (changed from \$20,000 to \$5,000),
- Grants for affordable housing programs – request for proposals (changed from \$50,000 to \$60,000), and
- ALICE rental buy-down program (changed from \$25,000 to \$30,000).

**Appointment of Nominating Committee** – Bruce and Kimberly agreed to serve on the Nominating Committee. The slate of candidates will be presented in June and the election in July.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **Education/Relationship Building – Convener is Hugh Gordon**

The committee met with Roger Wilson, City Alderman, to Frederick to help identify the municipalities in the County. Frederick County Association of Realtors (FCAR) has been instrumental in working with the committee. The committee will identify housing challenges encountered by the municipalities and begin to work on plans to address these challenges by setting up informal

social gatherings, such as coffee hours and happy hours. A scripted message will be prepared for these gatherings.

**Systems – Convener is Kandy.**

The committee met with Ryan, Jason and John Maneval, Oculus to gather information and try to understand how a systems map could be developed. The committee is somewhat divided on the concept and would like guidance to move forward. Kimberly, Mark and Milton will meet with committee.

**Policy – Convener is Mark.**

The committee reviewed the recordation tax Bill 20-03 for the County Council in support of the preservation for agriculture funding and first-time homebuyers. After weighing the pros and cons of both farmers and homebuyers, the committee decided not to take sides and stay neutral.

**Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDU) Ordinance -- Mark**

Mark reported the MPDU Ordinance is a spinoff from the Policy Committee. In addition to several members of the AHC, there are approximately 20 stakeholders in the workgroup. The workgroup plans a comprehensive review of the MPDU Ordinance and will meet on Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Public Liaison: County Council** -- Jessica noted the County Council will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> to increase the percentage for agricultural preservation and decrease for affordable housing and other categories. However, the dollar amount remains the same. The tax increase poses a burden for new homebuyers and those refinancing or transferring deeds, causing them to pay another recordation tax again.

Jessica also reported that the Board of Education has two parcels of land deemed as surplus. The County Executive is recommending these parcels for workforce housing. They are in the Tuscarora and Dearbought communities. Milton will be meeting with the County Executive regarding this matter.

The County Executive will hold a public hearing on March 23<sup>rd</sup> on the budget,

**Public Liaison: Frederick City Alderman** – Derek reported the City will hold a workshop on Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> to discuss the allocation of funds by the Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG) to buy properties for affordable housing in Frederick City.

**Announcement** –

James Baker announced that there are proposed changes to the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) that will affect the access of funding in our community. For additional details and the process to submit comments, a meeting will be held on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 10:30 am – 12:00 noon at the Hillcrest Commons Community Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 P.M

The next AHC meeting is on April 14<sup>th</sup>.

Minutes submitted by Marva Younger, Secretary