

Minutes of the Affordable Housing Council (AHC) Meeting
Tuesday, October 13, 2020
2:30-4:00 pm
Virtual Via WebEx and
Facebook Live on Frederick County Boards and Commissions Facebook Page

Minutes of Meeting

Call to Order: Chairperson Mark Long called the meeting to order at 2:31 and reviewed good virtual meeting practices and protocols. Ryan Trout stated: Public comments will be accepted on the AHC live portal located at www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/Commissions, or by calling toll-free 855-9252801, entering meeting code 9813, and leaving a voicemail comment to be played back to the board or entering into a queue to give live public comment. Written comments and transcribed voice messages will be included in the AHC record and minutes. Please note that personnel matters are confidential and cannot be received through this kind of forum.

Roll Call: Taken by Secretary Diane Bill. She asked each individual to introduce themselves after their name was called.

Members Present: Angie Liddiard, Diane Bill, Jason Wiley, Kandy Alexander, Kimberly Ashkenazi, Malcolm Furgol, Mark Long, Mary Ellen Mitchell. Bruce Zavos and Hugh Gordon joined after 3:10.

Members Absent: Linda Duckett and Patricia Galloway

Public Officials/Staff Liaisons Present: Milton Baily Director DHCD; Ryan Trout, DHCD; Kimberly Halter, DHCD; Jessica Fitzwater, Frederick County Council; Derek Shackelford, Frederick City Alderman; Robin Inskip, Frederick County Finance; Monica Bearden, Deputy CAO Frederick County

Guests and Visitors Present: Roger Sobkowiak; Jodie Ostoich, IHA; Alan Feinberg; CJ Tyree, Taft Mills Group

Agenda: Kimberly Ashkenazi made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mary Ellen seconded the motion. The agenda was approved unanimously.

Minutes for September 9th, 2020 Meeting: Kimberly Ashkenazi made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mary Ellen Mitchell seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Re-appointments: Mark announced that the following members were confirmed by the County Council and County Executive for a two-year term, 2020-2022: Kimberly Ashkenazi, Linda Duckett, Malcolm Furgol, Hugh Gordon, Mark Long.

Railroad Square Presentation: CJ Tyree of Taft Mills Group presented this project proposed for Brunswick. Taft Mills Group is the affordable housing arm of Taft Family Ventures and is committed to more projects in Frederick County. CJ spoke of the role of Frederick County's support of affordable housing in bringing this project to this point. This is a \$20 million LIHTC project which has been in the works for over four years. The project partners with many Frederick County based organizations including Zavos Architecture and Design and Interfaith Housing Alliance. IHA will be the property manager and offer support services at this site. The Residences at Railroad square will consist of 45 1-,2- and 3-bedroom units. Rent range is \$590-1250 based on 30, 40 and 50 percent AMI accordingly. Some of the amenities include its setting in the midst of community businesses and activities and access to the MARC train line, which is within 100 feet of the property. Community input was used for deciding on aesthetics and incorporating adjoining structures into the development. Comments from committee members included noting that this project has encountered some resistance, CJ has committed a lot of time and work, IHA is already operating in Brunswick, overall positivity. The question arose, when can this project be expected to move forward. CJ said a final decision will be given by the state in mid-December which would make the closing take place in the fall of 2021.

Before Milton spoke about RFPs, he brought up the subject of the AHC writing a letter of support for the Residences at Railroad Square to the state and Secretary Holt. He stated that any support we can show to the state would go a long way in the state's approval of this project. Mark asked if we as a Council should indeed send a letter. Milton was emphatic that a letter would be very effective. Mark asked for a motion that the executive committee write a letter of support. Mary Ellen made a motion that the executive committee write a letter to Secretary Holt in support of the Railroad Square Project before the next meeting. Kimberly seconded this motion. A roll call vote was taken by the Secretary of AHC. All members present voted yes to this motion except for Bruce and Mark who recused themselves. The motion passed with seven yes votes.

RFP Updates: Milton stated that for the school site RFPs the county has received 5 submissions. One was deemed unresponsive and 2 will be interviewed next week. He also spoke about Sharpe Square having difficulties leasing and filling units due to Covid 19. The developer is proposing income averaging to increase eligible tenants and in turn fill the units. Income averaging uses prospective tenant AMIs that are lower and higher than the 60% AMI originally used for this project. 15 units would be designated for income averaging. The county and the city are in support of this proposal. Sharpe Square could endanger their agreement and incur penalties with the city, county, state and HUD if they cannot lease the units. County and City reviews and hearing for this income averaging proposal will take place in October and November. Milton asked for support at the hearings and letters to interested parties.

MPDU Review Workgroup Update: Ryan said the workgroup met in September and will meet again in October. All have been tasked with research and proposing revisions of ordinances and zoning for balance and relief for homeowners, renters and developers. A graduate student has

been hired to help with organization. The original time frame of 9-12 months should be met with a wrap up of the review to take place in the first quarter of 2021.

Committee Updates: **Messaging/Education**- met 10/12 and discussed methods to provide easily accessible sources for affordable housing information. **Policy**-met and discussed community land trusts. Ron Cramer will give a future AHC presentation. He asked members to do some research when possible. Also, discussed Kai Hagen's proposed legislation regarding the eviction process and how the AHC's mission is connected to this.

Staff Liaisons/Elected Officials Updates:

Milton Bailey/DHCD (1) Will introduce previously discussed Sharpe Square proposal to the city on 10/20, workshopped on 10/21 and hearing 11/5. Asked AHC to send a rep or provide a supporting statement to the hearing. (2) Senior Alice rent buydown program presented to the County Council on 10/20. (3) Will be introducing a PILOT amendment that will lift the annual cap. This will take place Dec/Jan. (4) Thanked education and policy committee for moving the AHC agenda forward.

Jessica Fitzwater/County Council (1) stated her opinion is that the AHC should be part of any eviction policy discussion. (2) Councilman McKay's proposed legislation to change the MPDU PIL fee will be held until the MPDU review committee is finished. (3) New ALICE report shows that racial disparity has grown which gives rationale for a push in affordable housing policies and funding in Frederick County. (4) City/County/The Religious Coalition joint rental assistance program has funds available and many people are in need. She wants to connect people to monies before the funds run out at the end of the year. Will try to get updates and discuss ways to make these connections. Attendees offered up some ideas.

Derek Shackelford/City Alderman (1) stated the new ALICE report shows that the AHC needs to work on proposing legislation or policy changes to fix affordable housing issues (2) The city has hired Ramonta Cottrell as Director of Housing and Human Services

Public Comments: There were no public comments at this time.

AHC Updates and Comments: **Mary Ellen**- Housing study results information will be shared in Dec/Jan. Look at The Religious Coalition website for rental assistance info. **Malcolm**-2020 Census extended to the end of October. Please participate. Thanked people for participating in ALICE report presentation. Go to unitedway.org or email him for questions. **Mark**-Sat in on a Community Development Network meeting discussing Opportunity Zones. He discussed bringing more affordable housing developments to Frederick County at this meeting. The Livable Frederick, South Frederick Corridor small area plan is starting to be looked at. Mark has been invited to participate in this discussion and would like to advocate for more affordable housing units in this small area plan.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:18 pm

The next meeting will be on November 10th, 2020 at 2:30 pm