

Chatham County Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

Draft Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 4, 2021

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Virtual Meeting

Committee members present: Carolyn Huggins, Susan Levy, Richard Poole, Kyle Shipp, John Foley, Chanel Hough, Chip Price

Committee members absent: Pamela Baldwin, Bob Schmidt, Victoria Navarro, Linette Tyson

Others: Stephanie Watkins-Cruz (Chatham County), Erika Brown (TJCOG), Bryan Thompson (Chatham County)

1. Welcome and Check-In

Susan Levy opened the meeting by welcoming those present.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Adopt Meeting Minutes

Richard Poole motioned to approve the minutes for February 4, 2021, and Carolyn Huggins seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

4. FY2021-2022 Housing Trust Fund Changes

Staff shared with the Committee the proposed changes to the Housing Trust Fund (HTF) Guidelines, which provide clarification on how to manage allocation of additional funding for affordable housing projects if funding for the HTF is returned or increased during the fiscal year, including outside of the HTF Application Cycle. Richard Poole motioned to approve the updated HTF Guidelines as proposed, John Foley seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously.

After the motion to amend the Guidelines was approved, the group discussed the types of potential applications that would be accepted for the coming cycle of the HTF and whether it made sense to accept applications for housing programs given the demand for affordable housing units within the County. Carolyn Huggins mentioned that the application received for pre-development houses under the housing program category was not suitable to approve. Stephanie Watkins-Cruz reminded the group that the HTF should be strategic in how it approves funds, given the limited amount available and the high demand for funding. Stephanie also mentioned that if the Committee wanted to fund feasibility studies or housing programs, this could be done outside of the HTF cycle, as part of a “strategic housing effort”. This was added into the HTF Guidelines to provide flexibility for new projects and opportunities



that may not fit well within the HTF Application Cycle. Several members mentioned they would prefer to fund projects that are innovative, like the Tiny Home Village application. Overall, the group approved removing housing programs as an eligible activity, which was previously approved as part of the prior motion to amend the HTF Guidelines.

Committee members were then reminded that funding for the Retreat at Pittsboro to reimburse school impact fees was no longer necessary to make the project feasible. Therefore, the funding would be returned and could be reallocated to another applicant to the HTF. The Committee discussed whether the funding should be allocated to the application from Rebuilding Together of the Triangle, as the application scored high – higher than Habitat for Humanity as well, who was also not fully funded – and was not awarded full funding.

There was discussion about whether the Committee would like to recommend awarding additional funds to Habitat for Humanity for land acquisition, as they were not awarded full funding during the application process either. The appraisal for the land that Habitat intended to purchase came in lower than what the organization outlined within their application, which the funding award was contingent upon. However, although the appraisal came in at \$93,000 while the requested amount was \$125,000, and the funding level awarded remained at \$60,000 despite the appraisal. Several members suggested that we need to request that an appraisal is included with the application submission rather than later, so as to better inform decisions at the time of awarding funding. Richard Poole asked whether our agreement was to pay for the lesser of the two parcels of land, or whether we provided funding of \$60,000 in full to Habitat. The agreement with Habitat is to fund \$60,000, with the idea that if they secure the remaining amount, they can purchase both lots. Stephanie also mentioned that they may come back in the next cycle to request additional funds to purchase the second lot. Staff shared the development agreement showing that the award was \$60,000 to go toward land acquisition.

The group discussed whether it would be appropriate to request a change in the guidelines to outline the process for how and when to approve allocating funding that is returned or received outside of the HTF Application Cycle and recommendations.

Susan Levy noted that it seems there were three options for the group to choose from in terms of reallocating the funding: 1) AHAC could choose to not reallocate funds and put the funds back into the HTF for next year's Application Cycle, 2) AHAC could decide to approve splitting the returned funding between the two organizations, or 3) AHAC could award all of the returned funding to the higher scoring applicant of the two, which is Rebuilding Together. Chanel Haugh suggested that the group determine more ways to measure the timing and impact of the various applications before we make that decision. John Foley mentioned that we have already reviewed the applications and scored them based on total impact and timing, so may not be necessary.

Richard made a motion to approve the \$52,800 in funding received back from the Third Wave Housing HTF award to reallocate all of the funds to Rebuilding Together of the Triangle. Carolyn Huggins voted against the motion, all other committee members present voted to approve the motion. The motion was approved 5-1.

The updated HTF application and scoring rubrics were not reviewed during this meeting and will be reviewed at the next meeting on May 6, 2021. Stephanie mentioned that the group should review the updated preservation scoring rubric by the next meeting and provide suggestions to changes for the



new construction scoring rubric. Additionally, unrelated, if anyone is interested in being added to the list to discuss homelessness in Chatham County, reach out to Stephanie.

5. Around the Table

No information was shared during this time. John Foley motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:30pm, Susan Levy seconded. All approved adjourning the meeting.

Staff contacts:

Stephanie Watkins-Cruz, Chatham County Policy Analyst – 919-545-8398 | stephaniew.cruz@chathamnc.org

Erika Brown, Triangle J Council of Governments Housing Program Manager – 919-558-2700 | ebrown@tjcog.org

