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Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 18, 2025

11:30 AM

Joint Workshop with Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

Broward Center for the Performing Arts - Mary N. Porter Riverview
Ballroom - 201 SW 5th Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33312

CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP

FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION

DEAN J. TRANTALIS Mayor

STEVEN GLASSMAN Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District II

JOHN C. HERBST Commissioner - District I

PAM BEASLEY-PITTMAN Commissioner - District III

BEN SORENSEN Commissioner - District IV

SUSAN GRANT, Acting City Manager

DAVID R. SOLOMAN, City Clerk

D'WAYNE M. SPENCE, Interim City Attorney

PATRICK REILLY, City Auditor

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Trantalis called the Joint Workshop to order at 11:40 a.m.

ROLL CALL**COMMISSION QUORUM ESTABLISHED**

Commission Members Present: Commissioner John C. Herbst, Vice Mayor Steven Glassman, Commissioner Pamela Beasley-Pittman, Commissioner Ben Sorensen, and Mayor Dean J. Trantalis

Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) Members present: Chair Susan Spragg, Commissioner Pamela Beasley-Pittman, William Condon, Rich DeGirolamo, Arminda Figueroa, Willie McKay, Roderick Newkirk, Augustina Sklar (participated via communications technology), and Amanda Wilson

Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) Members not present: Shantel Jairam

Also Present: Acting City Manager Susan Grant, City Clerk David R. Soloman, Interim City Attorney D'Wayne M. Spence, and City Auditor Patrick Reilly

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

BUS-1 [25-0250](#) Joint Workshop with Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Chair Susan Spragg provided opening comments, discussed the purpose of the Workshop, AHAC's responsibilities, and related background information. Chair Spragg narrated the AHAC presentation.

A copy of the presentation has been made part of the backup to this Agenda item.

Chair Spragg discussed details of the AHAC October 2024 (Report) that indicated market forces are not addressing the necessary supply of affordable housing. Chair Spragg discussed related information and stated that job opportunities are skewed towards low wages, which creates a demand for low-cost housing. She cited examples and expounded on related details.

Chair Spragg said that the AHAC is requesting that the Commission direct Staff to analyze, evaluate, and implement its three (3) specific recommendations: 1) a strategy to expedite development approvals for affordable housing permits; 2) waiving affordable housing development fees and impact fees; and 3) reducing parking requirements for affordable housing developments.

Mayor Trantalis remarked on significant negative community feedback involving delays in the housing development permitting process. In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Alfred Battle, Development Services Department (DSD) Acting Director, explained Staff efforts to address development permit solutions and assist all applicants in the process. Mr. Battle said that Staff requests an affordable housing predevelopment meeting to ensure assistance with monitoring the permit process and thorough communications with the applicant to achieve timeline goals. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Chair Spragg explained that AHAC's three (3) recommendations align with other municipalities and remarked on the value of predevelopment meetings.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman noted the eleven (11) recommendations to address affordable housing, which she considered as an AHAC member, and confirmed that AHAC's top three (3) recommendations were the most pertinent towards achieving affordable housing goals. Mayor Trantalis remarked on his perspective and Staff's efforts to implement an efficient permit process for affordable housing developments.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question, Chair Spragg confirmed Staff's efforts towards the expedited review of affordable housing development permitting. Commissioner Sorensen noted the need to include affordable housing development incentives and the expedited review process. Mr. Battle confirmed and explained related information. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Chair Spragg reviewed the second AHAC recommendation, waving affordable housing development fees and impact fees to reduce development costs, and cited examples. Chair Spragg commented on utilizing alternate methods of fee payments for qualified, affordable housing projects that could include funding from Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) funds. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question regarding the ability of the City to waive impact fees, Interim City Attorney D'Wayne Spence

explained that Florida counties, municipalities, and Special Districts can waive impact fees via Ordinance and do not have to offset the impact of those fee waivers. Interim City Attorney Spence remarked on the need for a related study when updating impact fees and explained related information.

Mayor Trantalis remarked on the impact of fee waivers. Interim City Attorney Spence explained the State Legislature's recent update to the required study and discussed related information.

Mayor Trantalis commented on his understanding that an impact fee must be used to address a service need, such as water and sewer, and the School Board of Broward County. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding the waiver of other impact fees. Chair Spragg reiterated the point of having alternative methods to fund waived impact fees for affordable housing developments and cited the example of the Affordable Housing Trust.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question regarding waiving water and sewer connection fees, Commissioner Herbst noted the inability to do so because related bond funding covenants and State Statutes. Acting City Manager Susan Grant confirmed and noted the ability to subsidize those waivers from the General Fund and other alternate revenue sources. Commissioner Sorensen requested that Staff provide additional information regarding other revenue sources to fund impact fee waivers. Interim City Attorney Spence and Acting City Manager Grant confirmed and discussed related information.

AHAC Member Rich DeGirolamo commented on the importance of the City being an ally with private development. Mr. DeGirolamo noted the need to address market-rate housing projects, incentivize building affordable housing units versus a developer's option to pay into the Affordable Housing Trust, and expounded on his viewpoint.

Mayor Trantalis remarked on providing a package of incentives for development of affordable housing units, similar to incentives provided by the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and tax abatement in other areas of the City. Mayor Trantalis discussed the need for adequate funding for incentive packages. Mr. DeGirolamo commented on related incentive discussions with developers. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Chair Spragg discussed the third AHAC recommendation regarding a reduction in parking. Chair Spragg expounded on related information, including affordable housing developments near available transportation

focused on elderly residents and individuals with disabilities, and cited examples in other municipalities.

Mayor Trantalis discussed his perspective on reducing parking requirements to reduce developer costs, remarked on concerns regarding parking requirements in Flagler Village, noted the need for businesses to have adequate parking, cited examples, and noted the lack of public transportation.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman commented on AHAC discussions related to the parking reduction recommendation and reaching a balance. Commissioner Sorensen commented on implementing a partial reduction to achieve a balance.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Chris Cooper, Acting Assistant City Manager, discussed the context-specific nature of parking reduction requests considered by the Planning and Zoning Board and cited examples.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman remarked on Commission efforts to balance parking reduction requests for medical office buildings and replicating those efforts on a case-by-case basis for affordable housing developments.

Commissioner Herbst discussed the consequences and neighborhood complaints related to reduced parking requirements in residential developments that allow few guest parking spaces. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question, Mr. Cooper confirmed the current parking reductions applicable to Workforce Housing require one (1) vehicle space per unit. Commissioner Sorensen reiterated his recommendation for Staff to explore a further parking reduction. Mr. Cooper discussed related opportunities and paths forward. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mr. Cooper discussed the development approval process for other areas of the City, cited examples that include the opportunity for a Commission Call-Up Agenda item to shorten the development approval timeline.

Mayor Trantalis remarked on options to shorten the development approval timeline to move a project forward, and related savings to the developer. Further comment and discussion ensued. Vice Mayor Glassman confirmed the need for flexibility.

In response to Vice Mayor Glassman's question regarding *Live Local Act (Act)* projects, Mr. Cooper explained the approval process and that all developers must meet existing zoning requirements. Mr. Cooper said that the *Act* allows increased height and density and discussed examples of *Act* development projects under review.

In response to Vice Mayor Glassman's questions, Mr. Cooper explained Staff's review of those projects and remarked on related information. Vice Mayor Glassman commented on his understanding. Mr. Cooper reconfirmed that developers need to meet aspects of the Code and explained that forty percent (40%) of those developments need affordable housing units below market rate. Vice Mayor Glassman remarked on his perspective.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Mr. Cooper explained that one (1) of the *Act* development projects is three hundred feet (300') tall and is located on Andrews Avenue south of Broward Health.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question, Mr. Cooper confirmed the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) height limit is five hundred feet (500') in the downtown core and remarked on the ability to request an additional height exemption if the building does not interfere with FAA operations.

Mr. Cooper confirmed that the building height in the downtown Regional Activity Center (RAC) could be limitless. Mayor Trantalis discussed his viewpoint regarding developers realizing the ability to increase building height in the downtown RAC, similar to the development in downtown Miami. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question, Mr. Cooper discussed the Commission's ability to pursue a strategy that limits building height in the downtown RAC in concert with the Office of the City Attorney. Commissioner Sorensen remarked on his understanding and the need to preserve property rights while implementing changes in the future. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Chair Spragg provided closing comments, requesting that Staff review recommendations included in their Report, provide feedback, and make additional recommendations or modifications. AHAC also requests that following the implementation of its recommendations, the Commission meet with them quarterly to review the impact of the recommendations on affordable housing.

Mayor Trantalis acknowledged the work and effort of the AHAC and the need to continue to pursue incentivizing affordable housing projects. He expounded on his perspective regarding ongoing development, affordability, and the impact of the *Act* on residents' quality of life.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman requested Commission direction to Staff based on AHAC's eleven (11) recommendations. Mayor Trantalis confirmed and said that going forward, Joint Workshops with the AHAC should be held quarterly.

Mayor Trantalis remarked on concerns related to AHAC's recommended changes to setbacks that would interfere with existing streetscapes. Chair Spragg clarified her comments and said changes to setbacks were not included in the AHAC recommendations, only a parking reduction.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Trantalis adjourned the meeting at 12:37 p.m.