



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**DRAFT**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE**  
**HOMELESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HAC)**  
**UNITED WAY OF BROWARD COUNTY**  
**COLKER CONFERENCE ROOM**  
**1300 SOUTH ANDREWS AVENUE**  
**FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA 33316**  
**THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2024 – 1:00 P.M.**

**July 2023 – June 2024**

		<b><u>Attendance</u></b>	
Paula Yukna, Chair	P	7	0
Lilli De Lucca, Vice Chair	A	5	2
Tony Baday	A	1	2
Ray Dettman	P	4	0
Robin Martin	P	7	0
Amy Schimelfenyg	P	7	0
Barry Somerstein	A	6	1

**Staff**

Luisa Agathon, Neighbor Support Manager  
Marie Joseph, Homeless Initiatives Coordinator  
K. Cruitt, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

**Communication to the City Commission**

**Motion** made by Mr. Martin, seconded by Mr. Schimelfenyg, that City Staff communicate to the Commission that we would like to have a joint meeting with the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee to discuss opportunities to assist the homeless in our community. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

**Motion** made by Mr. Martin, seconded by Ms. Schimelfenyg, for City Staff to reach out to Broward County to establish a partnership for respite beds, and for Staff to make a report to the Commission on it. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

**I. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Yukna called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**II. Determination of Quorum**

Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

**III. Public Sign-In**

Members of the public in attendance were asked to sign in at this time.

#### **IV. Approval of May Minutes, Clarification of April Minutes**

**Motion** made by Mr. Dettman, seconded by Chair Yukna, to accept the April minutes as presented. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

**Motion** made by Mr. Dettman, seconded by Chair Yukna, to accept the May minutes as distributed. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

#### **V. Agenda Items**

- Broward County Homeless Continuum of Care Analysis

Dr. Steve Rios of Florida Atlantic University (FAU) gave a PowerPoint presentation on Broward County's Continuum of Care (CoC) for homeless individuals.

Dr. Rios shared questions he had prepared for the Committee members, the first of which asked how Broward County's services for the homeless population could be improved. The members discussed this, with Mr. Dettman noting that current regulations require housing units to have a minimum of 400 sq. ft. He suggested that this minimum could be reduced, as many individuals need only an efficiency unit.

Chair Yukna stated that there should be more shelters, pointing out that the available shelter space is insufficient for the need. She expressed concern for what will happen when the Unauthorized Public Camping and Public Sleeping Bill takes effect later in the year.

Mr. Martin referred to a pilot project in Denver, Colorado which provided individuals with money and tracked how those funds were spent. Most of the recipients used the funds for basic needs.

Leann Barber, member of the public and Chair of Fort Lauderdale's Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC), stated that the existing system is riddled with barriers and inefficiencies that prevent homeless persons from securing housing in a timely manner. She suggested that Broward County may wish to hire consultants to determine how individuals can be moved through the system more quickly.

Ms. Barber continued that shelters are not conducive to long-term living and may not allow individuals to bring their possessions or pets with them. She suggested that "tiny home" units may be a solution until individuals can find longer-term units. Another option is accessory dwelling units (ADUs), which are separate units constructed on a homeowner's property and could be rented as affordable housing.

Ms. Barber also noted that affordable housing does not typically assist households and individuals who have very low incomes. Roughly 25% of low-income households in Broward County earn less than 30% of the average median income and would not qualify for most affordable housing programs.

Dr. Rios also asked the Committee what recommendations they might have for pallet shelters or villages in Broward County. The Committee members discussed this option, including the need for a presence in this type of shelter to assist individuals with applications for benefits such as disability, among other needs.

Ms. Schimelfenyg pointed out that the estimated cost of a pallet village is approximately \$300,000. Mr. Dettman commented that churches and nonprofit entities could construct pallet shelters on their land; in addition, as many homeless persons and families live in their cars, these sites would have parking needs. It was suggested that the facilities should be constructed in areas with access to transit.

Dr. Rios asked what was most important about the needs of homeless persons or those about to be homeless in Broward. The Committee members identified both temporary and permanent housing, as well as more basic needs such as food. Mr. Martin commented that a dormitory-style facility could house many individuals and provide economy of scale.

- Committee's Recommendation Topics

The members discussed potential recommendation topics, with Mr. Dettman recalling that there is consideration of using the old City jail as a shelter. Broward County has also considered reopening the stockade for this purpose, although there is some opposition to this proposal.

Mr. Dettman continued that Fort Lauderdale's Mayor plans to request that if homeless individuals are arrested for unauthorized sleeping or camping, they be incarcerated for 90 days so they can "go through the system."

Chair Yukna pointed out that being homeless is not against the law. Mr. Martin advised, however, that creating a campsite is against the law. He felt this would be addressed further by the courts.

Mr. Dettman suggested that assistance be solicited from churches and/or other nonprofit entities. He felt if a unit is sufficiently small, is located in a large building, and does not require parking, it will be affordable. He characterized this as a potential long-term solution for the City.

Chair Yukna asked where the City might identify land for this purpose. Mr. Dettman reiterated that he believed this option would be possible.

Mr. Martin advised that there is likely to be significant resistance to the creation of a “homeless hotel,” which would offer very small units. He continued that the best way to help homeless persons was to integrate them through inclusionary and affordable units in the same developments as market-rate units.

Mr. Dettman explained that he was not suggesting the structure be limited to homeless persons, but should be available to individuals or families with low incomes as well. Mr. Martin noted that this is already a goal of affordable housing, and the difficulty will be in providing a place for individuals who do not currently have income.

Mr. Martin continued that there is also insufficient medical respite care for people experiencing homelessness and coming out of hospitals. He advised that he would recommend the City become one of the partners, in conjunction with Broward County and the hospital districts, to take advantage of an existing and empty assisted living facility which could house 14 individuals coming out of local hospitals. 100% of the facility would serve homeless individuals. He concluded that the Committee should consider recommending the use of this facility to the City Commission as a solution for a specific segment of the homeless population.

Mr. Dettman requested input on the possibility of churches and nonprofit entities allowing tiny homes on their properties. Ms. Schimelfenyg pointed out that these entities may not own land. Mr. Martin replied that some nonprofit organizations partner with churches to provide short-term housing for families with children in the churches’ sanctuaries or other rooms.

Mr. Martin explained that any church with sufficient land to offer housing may have child care facilities and/or schools on that property. The churches may be more willing to assist specific households experiencing homelessness, such as single mothers with young children, but would not be able to assist the chronically homeless population.

Ms. Schimelfenyg recalled that Miami-Dade County uses a percentage of their bed tax to fund programs that help homeless persons, and suggested that this be considered for Broward County as well. Mr. Martin explained that Broward County does not have an entity with employees who advocate on behalf of the homeless population in addition to the work they are already doing. This type of advocacy would include outreach to the individual City Commissioners as well as the business community. When the Committee sends its recommendations to the City Commission, there is no advocate who would follow up to work toward some of the more difficult recommendations.

Mr. Martin continued that the members of both the City and County Commissions have different viewpoints on the issue of homelessness. He concluded that there is not enough political will to pass an item such as a bed tax funding programs for homeless individuals.

Mr. Martin concluded that the proposal addressing respite care in assisted living facilities provides an opportunity to assist a specific segment of the homeless population which

needs this type of care. He again suggested that the Committee recommend the City Commission review this option and meet with City and County staff to determine its viability. The proposed medical respite facility would provide 14 beds and cost \$1.5 million.

**Motion** made by Mr. Martin, seconded by Ms. Schimelfenyg, for City Staff to reach out to Broward County to establish a partnership for respite beds, and for Staff to make a report to the Commission on it. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Mr. Dettman recalled that at the previous meeting, there had been brief discussion of a declaration of emergency. Mr. Martin advised that the Unauthorized Public Camping and Public Sleeping Bill takes effect on October 1, 2024, but no lawsuits may be filed until January 1, 2025. Counties and municipalities have until January 1 to declare an emergency.

Mr. Martin requested clarification of the Committee's timeline. Ms. Agathon replied that it is two years. Chair Yukna stated that at some point, she would like the Committee to present its recommendations to the City Commission.

Mr. Dettman asked if Staff has considered addressing zoning regulations with regard to unit sizes. Ms. Agathon advised that there are Staff members who focus directly on affordable housing.

- Communication to City Commission Requesting Joint Meeting with Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

Ms. Barber noted that the AHAC has made a request to schedule a joint meeting with the Homeless Advisory Committee (HAC). The proposed dates are in November or December 2024. The request will need to be sent as a communication to the City Commission before the joint meeting can be scheduled.

**Motion** made by Mr. Martin, seconded by Mr. Schimelfenyg, that City Staff communicate to the Commission that we would like to have a joint meeting with the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee to discuss opportunities to assist the homeless in our community. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

- Staff Updates

Ms. Agathon reported that the City is currently seeking to hire a new Homeless Initiatives Program Manager. She also noted that today's meeting is likely to be the final meeting held at United Way of Broward County, as a facility currently used by the City is designating a room for meetings. The room will be outfitted with recording equipment and is expected to be available by the August 2024 meeting.

Ms. Agathon continued that at the most recent City Commission meeting, the Commission approved 20 emergency shelter beds in partnership with The Caring Place, which is located in Hollywood. The beds are available for men, women, and families for the City of Fort Lauderdale. Staff is working to establish a referral process for these beds.

Mr. Dettman stated that he has not received any minutes of Broward County minutes. Ms. Agathon advised that she will ask again. It was noted that the County's meeting minutes are part of the public record.

- Discussion

None.

## **VI. Adjourn**

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 2:33 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

**Next Meeting: August 8, 2024**

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]