

City of Fort Lauderdale

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Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

12:00 PM

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

JOHN C. HERBST Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District 1

STEVEN GLASSMAN Commissioner - District 2

PAM BEASLEY-PITTMAN Commissioner - District 3

BEN SORENSEN Commissioner - District 4

RICKELLE WILLIAMS, City Manager

DAVID R. SOLOMAN, City Clerk

SHARI L. McCARTNEY, City Attorney

PATRICK REILLY, City Auditor

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Trantalis called the meeting to order at 12:06 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commission Members Present: Vice Mayor John C. Herbst (arrived at 12:14 p.m.), Commissioner Steven Glassman, Commissioner Pamela Beasley-Pittman, Commissioner Ben Sorensen and Mayor Dean J. Trantalis

Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) Members

Present: AHAC Chair Susan Spragg, AHAC Vice Chair Shantel Jairam, Commissioner Pamela Beasley-Pittman, William Condon, Rich DeGirolamo, Erin Lecuyer, Willie McKay, and Amanda Wilson

Affordable Housing Advisory Committee Members Not Present:

Agustina Sklar

COMMISSION QUORUM ESTABLISHED

Also Present: City Manager Rickelle Williams, City Clerk David R. Soloman, City Attorney Shari L. McCartney, and City Auditor Patrick Reilly

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

BUS-1 [26-0076](#)

Joint Workshop between the City Commission and the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) to Discuss the City of Fort Lauderdale's Affordable Housing Incentive Report - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

City Manager Williams introduced this Agenda item and announced that Rachel Williams, Housing and Community Development Manager, would lead the discussion on the AHAC's recommendation to advance three (3) new affordable housing strategies and the previously discussed incentives. Ms. Williams narrated a presentation entitled *CITY COMMISSION AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AHAC) JOINT WORKSHOP*.

A copy of the presentation is part of the backup to this Agenda item.

Mayor Trantalis discussed concerns related to potential community opposition to reducing lot sizes in single-family neighborhoods as part of affordable housing incentives. In response to Mayor Trantalis'

question regarding how to respond to those anticipated concerns, AHAC Chair Susan Spragg explained the genesis of this incentive and said that the current public land inventory process is ineffective, yielding no viable sites. AHAC is recommending expanded criteria and parameters, cited examples, and expounded on related examples as noted in the *Affordable Housing Advisory Committee 2025 Affordable Housing Incentive Report* (Report).

A copy of the Report is part of the backup to this Agenda item.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman clarified that this incentive aims to unlock development potential on existing nonconforming or irregular lots by allowing zoning flexibility to increase housing inventory. In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, AHAC Member Rich DeGirolamo stated that this incentive seeks an approach that respects neighborhood character and green space while implementing creative zoning and policy solutions to advance affordable housing inventory. Mayor Trantalis commented on tax incentives for affordable housing. Mr. DeGirolamo recommended that the City leverage its land assets and public-private partnership opportunities to develop a comprehensive, data-driven inventory identifying affordable housing opportunities. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Vice Mayor Herbst's questions regarding current minimum zoning lot size requirements, Chris Cooper, Deputy City Manager, said that single-family RS-8 and RS-4 zoning districts include minimum standards for both lot square footage and lot width and typical minimum lot sizes are around six thousand square feet (6,000 sq. ft.). He noted that many parcels are nonconforming, and in those instances property owners may seek relief through the Board of Adjustment, which has the authority to grant variances allowing development on lots that fall slightly below the required standards. Mr. Cooper noted the opportunity to revisit zoning regulations to better accommodate those parcels and meet goals based on Commission feedback. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Vice Mayor Herbst commented on historical housing patterns, noting that smaller homes on smaller lots accommodated large families and supported more affordable living. The trend toward larger homes and suburban sprawl has contributed to current housing affordability challenges. Vice Mayor Herbst expressed support for policies promoting smaller lots and denser, more modest housing. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Sorensen expressed support for incentivizing workforce and affordable housing. In response to Commissioner Sorensen's

question regarding whether zoning variances allowing reduced lot sizes could be conditioned upon the inclusion of affordable or workforce housing units, Mr. Cooper said such an approach would be a Commission policy decision and acknowledged that tying affordability requirements to variance approvals could be considered a potential justification for allowing deviations from existing land development regulations. Commissioner Sorensen commented on his support for expanding affordable housing strategies to include commercial and industrial properties. Mr. Cooper commented on viable opportunities to expand affordable housing through commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development by leveraging City-owned land and CRA partnerships. Further comment and discussion ensued.

City Manager Williams emphasized the need to establish clear criteria for incentivizing affordable housing developments and Commission policies that clearly define key components.

Commissioner Sorensen expressed support for targeting affordable housing incentives at fifty percent (50%) of Area Median Income (AMI), noting that this threshold is more aligned with local housing needs in contrast to the State's Live Local Act, which allows eligibility up to one hundred twenty percent (120%) of AMI. He suggested that the lower AMI target represents a more meaningful and impactful definition for community affordability.

Mr. Cooper said that upcoming updates on accessory dwelling units (ADUs) would include considerations related to minimum lot size requirements, which are directly connected to the broader discussion on zoning flexibility and smaller lots. In response to Commissioner Glassman's question regarding latest State legislative developments regarding ADUs, Mr. Cooper said an update would be forthcoming.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman recommended that AMI percentages should be clearly translated into dollar values to improve public understanding of the realities of income levels tied to affordable housing policies.

Mayor Trantalis discussed the need to be mindful that the small infill lot strategy to address affordable housing is nearing its limits, and said future efforts with bigger lots will likely need to shift toward larger, more complex developments such as multifamily or mixed-use projects. Further comment and discussion ensued. Mr. Cooper noted that future infill lot opportunities may be limited, but AHAC wants a more formal role in evaluating and advising on available infill parcels to maximize affordable housing potential.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding public awareness of affordable housing opportunities, Kevin Pulido, Strategic Communications Office Director, said staff can significantly improve public awareness by proactively using its communication channels and community networks to better inform residents about available units and the application process. Commissioner Beasley-Pittman discussed her viewpoint regarding the affordable housing audience and noted the need for stronger, more visible outreach such as electronic signage and targeted communications to ensure local residents are aware of and can access affordable housing opportunities. Commissioner Sorensen recommended establishing a periodic, structured communication system to notify the public of infill parcel availability that will improve transparency, coordination and public awareness of affordable housing opportunities, and cited examples. City Manager Williams confirmed.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman emphasized the importance of expanding affordable housing public awareness and education efforts particularly through first-time home buyer workshops. Staff should expand its role in hosting first-time home buyer education programs to help residents and employees access homeownership. Rachel Williams confirmed.

Chair Spragg discussed developing an Affordable Housing Master Plan (AHMP), remarked on Broward County's housing needs assessment, and recommended a City-specific housing assessment and master plan to provide more targeted data and an improved affordable housing strategy. Chair Spragg said that AHAC was selected by the Florida Housing Coalition for a support initiative that will result in an in-depth analysis of the City's land development regulations, prior AHAC reports, and existing housing policies. AHAC's selection provides an opportunity to refine policies, identify best practices, and develop a comprehensive, data-driven housing strategy, including partnerships to support workforce housing. Commissioner Sorensen confirmed his support of that initiative.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question regarding the cost to develop an AHMP, Ms. Williams remarked on the \$60,000 cost for a housing needs assessment in 2019. Mayor Trantalis discussed his perspective and questioned the need for further studies, emphasizing that the affordability crisis is already clear and that affordable housing production is largely driven by developer feasibility and available incentives. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Ms. Williams explained the current affordable housing gap need is fifty percent (50%) of AMI and

financial feasibility is hardest, requiring stronger or more creative incentives to attract development. Mayor Trantalis agreed, expounded on his viewpoint, and cited examples.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman said that the City should proactively engage successful, repeat developers to contribute to fifty percent (50%) of AMI affordable housing needs and expounded on her viewpoint. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Ms. Williams noted the need for affordable housing incentives to be designed to prioritize households most at risk of homelessness, with clear policy direction from the Commission to guide those efforts.

Mayor Trantalis referenced a recent opinion piece by a local architect in the *Sun Sentinel* discussing affordable and lower-income housing and the role cities can play in incentivizing private development to achieve those goals. He said that this article was relevant to the City's ongoing discussion about policy direction. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions regarding AMI levels that should be prioritized, Ms. Williams clarified that while the market is already producing projects in the eighty percent (80%) AMI and above range, the Commission is being asked for a clear policy choice between supporting existing market trends of eighty percent plus (80%+) AMI or prioritizing AMI rates below eighty percent (80%).

Commissioner Sorensen noted his support of deeper affordability levels below eighty percent (80%) of AMI.

City Manager Williams suggested fifteen percent (15%) or twenty percent (20%) of units in mixed-income development proposals should be designated as affordable for households at eighty percent (80%) or below AMI as benchmarks for future incentive programs. Mayor Trantalis recommended a multi-tiered, mixed-income approach that includes rental units at forty percent (40%) to sixty percent (60%) of AMI, sixty percent (60%) to eighty percent (80%) of AMI, and an eighty percent (80%) to one hundred twenty percent (120%) of AMI to create financially viable projects while addressing a broader range of housing needs, which would retain residents across numerous income levels. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman said that an affordable housing policy should reflect changing demographics, particularly seniors and working residents, and take a more inclusive approach to prevent housing instability and homelessness. Further comment and

discussion ensued.

Commissioner Sorensen suggested a policy targeting households at forty percent (40%) to sixty percent (60%) of AMI with a benchmark of fifty percent (50%) of AMI rental units within a development. Mayor Trantalis noted that may not be realistic. In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Mr. Cooper concurred and noted that target would likely be too high to be financially viable for developers.

City Manager Williams recommended establishing a target designating approximately twenty percent (20%) of rental units as affordable with flexibility based on project feasibility and evaluation of each project's financial structure. Commissioner Beasley-Pittman noted the need to move away from the current ten percent (10%) benchmark. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mr. Cooper requested Commission feedback on staff continuing to advance the ADU policy initiative. AHAC, in coordination with Housing and Community Development, Community Services, and Development Services Department, developed an ADU action plan focused on education, streamlined approvals, code updates, and tracking.

Vice Mayor Herbst said that the State Legislature is actively considering regulations related to ADUs, including provisions that would restrict their use as short-term rentals. Vice Mayor Herbst noted the importance of monitoring these legislative developments and cautioned against finalizing local ADU policies until direction has been received from the State to ensure alignment. Mr. Cooper agreed and explained related information. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions, Mr. Cooper explained that ADUs are currently allowed and could serve as an affordable housing tool, noting emerging lower-cost construction methods that improve their feasibility. Vice Mayor Herbst said the City should consider more flexible ADU size and design standards to allow smaller, more efficient units that better meet diverse housing needs, particularly for seniors and their families.

Mr. Cooper requested Commission direction regarding staff pursuing policy allowing certain impact fees to be waived for affordable housing developments. In response to Vice Mayor Herbst's question, Mr. Cooper confirmed that recent State legislation allows for a full waiver of certain impact fees for affordable housing developments. Implementing waivers would require amendments to the Code and the

waiver program would be structured as part of a broader, layered incentive strategy applied selectively on a case-by-case basis to support a development project's affordable housing components. The waiver program would apply only to the affordable portion of a development, while market-rate units would still be subject to standard impact fees. Mr. Cooper clarified the need for additional policy design, financial considerations, and legal review before implementation.

Vice Mayor Herbst expressed concern that waiving water and wastewater impact fees could conflict with associated infrastructure bond funding covenants as these fees are often pledged to service debt. Mr. Cooper acknowledged that this issue has not yet been fully analyzed and is a critical consideration that will need to be evaluated as part of developing any fee waiver policy.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's questions about the potential revenue impact of waiving impact fees for affordable housing projects, Yvette Matthews, Assistant City Manager, provided an example of an eighty-eight (88) unit affordable housing development serving households below sixty percent (60%) AMI that could receive approximately \$148,000 in waived fees. Ms. Matthews clarified that impact fee revenues fluctuate annually based on development activity. Park impact fees typically generate between \$2,000,000 and \$4,000,000 per year, while water and wastewater impact fees range from \$1,800,000 to \$5,000,000 annually. The specific portion of these revenues attributable to affordable housing projects is currently not known. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis discussed his perspective and said that while impact fee waivers can be an incentive for affordable housing, the lost revenue would need to be offset and requires careful policy design and safeguards, such as caps to manage the financial impact.

Commissioner Glassman noted that this is Chair Spragg's last meeting and expressed appreciation for her service and contributions to the AHAC.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Trantalis adjourned the meeting at 1:16 p.m.