

**Hernando County
Affordable Housing Advisory Committee
20 North Main St., Rm 160
Brooksville, FL 34601**

Meeting Date: July 18, 2025

Members Present: Kelly Long, Charles Wilson, Whitney Dinu, Jerry Campbell, Joseph Pastore, Beth Powanda, Yvonne Woods

Members Absent: 0

Staff/Guest(s) Present: Veda Ramirez, Velvet Burris, and Erin Gleason

Call to Order: Ms. Ramirez called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Roll Call: As evidenced by the sign in sheet and the verbal roll call, a quorum was met with seven (7) members present.

New members were introduced, and members were advised that new Chair and Vice Chair were need. Members of the committee nominated Kelly Long as Chair. Mr Wilson motioned for approval and Mr Pastore seconded the motion all other committee members agreed, and the motion was carried.

The committee nominated Mr Wilson as Vice Chairman, and motion was carried as Mr. Wilson was appointed to the open seat.

Public Comment: None.

Approval of Minutes: Ms. Long requested approval of the minutes for the June 2025 meeting. Ms. Long moved to approve, and Mr. Pastore and Ms. Powanda seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Old Business: Ms. Ramirez stated our office published a media release regarding the vacant seats on the committee. Ms. Ramirez advised our office is seeking a lender, essential service personnel (law enforcement, Hernando County employees, or school board employees), residential homebuilding industry personnel, and an employer of the jurisdiction. Prior members, Mr. Sanvenero and Mr. Ernest are no longer on the committee as Mr. Sanvenero has reached his term limit and Mr. Ernest did not resubmit an application. Mr. Campbell confirmed the terms with Ms. Ramirez, and she confirmed those on the committee can serve two (2) terms for two (2) years. They can take a one (1) year break between terms. Ms. Long requested information about the for-profit provider of affordable housing representative, and Ms. Ramirez stated the applicant was coming to us from a local Low Income Housing Tax Credit apartment complex but did not live in Hernando County and that disqualified her application. Ms. Ramirez stated that Habitat for Humanity Tampa Bay Gulfside was eligible to serve in multiple categories but ideally, they will be moving them into the residential home building industry category on the committee because we have limited individuals in that role. Then the category for citizens actively engaged in the banking and mortgage industry in connection with affordable housing will reopen, which we think will be more interested parties

Ms. Ramirez stated the Local Housing Incentive Inclusionary Housing Incentive Strategy is reviewed by the committee every year, and it will be brought up next month for discussion. The committee has the opportunity to talk about incentives that encourage affordable housing in our community. The two incentives available currently are expedited permitting and policy review. Mr. Wilson stated the idea of the “House in a Box” that Elon Musk created is something we should look into. It is a house inside a box, and once it is assembled, it does not go anywhere, and it is economically cost-effective. Mr. Wilson advised the structure can withstand a category 3 hurricane, and it is like a modular home.” Ms. Ramirez responded to Mr. Wilson explaining that we would need to get additional information from the funder regarding how that type of housing is classified and if it meets the Florida Building standards. Advise that it seems the home type would be considered as a manufactured home, which we presently are only allowed to set aside 10% of the funding. Reiterate that the funder is the one who has to give approval on the type of housing that the funds can be used. If it is allowed, we can definitely review this type of housing and bring it to the committee and BOCC for final approval.

Staff specified that the funder, Florida Housing Finance Corporation, has already identified several incentives for the committee review and we will be reviewing those for consideration or update.

New Business:

Ms. Burris discussed the progression in the SHIP program. There have been 5 closings for Down Payment Assistance in June, the 22/23 remaining amount of SHIP funds is fully encumbered, and there are several emergency repairs and owner-occupied rehabilitation projects happening and underway. HHS accepts all applications for all SHIP strategies.

Ms. Long proceeded with the Local Government Contribution Applications. Ms. Ramirez stated HHS has had several multi-family developers reach out for local government contribution to construction affordable housing in Hernando County, through Florida Housing Finance Corporation Request for Assistance. A notice was published stating HHS accepted applications, and HHS has received three applicants: Ekos at Grande Park (family units only), The Palms at Spring Hill (special needs and disability units available), and Vesta at Osowaw (special needs and disability units available). The review for these applications is being scheduled and will take place before the next AHAC meeting but not before the BOCC August 12 meeting for approval. HHS will provide a recommendation based upon the review teams’ score and then provide that recommendation to the BOCC. Mr. Wilson asked if the developers are competing for the properties or if they have their properties already. Ms. Ramirez stated they have their own properties.

Ms. Powanda asked about building near the water, and if that is a concern for these projects. Ms. Ramirez confirmed the location does not disqualify the builders, but the location does affect the scoring of the proposed project and reviews the team’s recommendations.

Ms. Woods asked if there was any interest on the East side of Hernando County. Ms. Ramirez stated at this time, no. There have been some discussions about building in that area but there has not been any affordable multi-family development interest at this time.

Mr. Wilson asked about special need housing for Veterans and Ms. Ramirez responded that vouchers are in place with Hernando County Housing Authority called Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing, from the HUD-VASH Program. It combines rental assistance with VA services through a Veterans case manager.

Informational: Ms. Ramirez encouraged the committee to attend the July 22nd BOCC meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.