

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

Meeting Date: August 15, 2025

Members Present: Kelly Long, Charles Wilson, Whitney Dinu, Jerry Campbell,

Members Absent: 3 - Joseph Pastore, Beth Powanda, Yvonne Woods

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

Call to Order: Ms. Long 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 four (4) members present.

Public Comment: None.

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

Old Business: Ms. Ramirez stated our office has received three (3) applications for the open seats on the AHAC committee. Our office is still accepting applications, but two (2) applicants are eligible to serve, one (1) for a citizen that represents the employers in the County and an individual from the Planning Department to serve in the planning agency position. The third applicant is one our office is still trying to place on the committee to represent the appropriate category. The first two applicants will fulfill two of the committee vacancies, and we will have the required participants for the committee. Mr. Campbell confirmed the BOCC will review those applications, and Ms. Ramirez confirmed and stated the BOCC does have those applications at this time and that they are scheduled for appointment August 26, 2025. Ms. Ramirez stated Ms. Dinu will be switched to the “residential builder” from “lender” while serving on the AHAC committee, upon approval from Board of County Commissioners.

Ms. Ramirez stated regarding the LGAO Contribution, our office went before the BOCC on Tuesday, August 12th and selected PACE Preservation and SoHo Housing, a non-profit, for the LGAO Contribution. There were three (3) applicants that applied for the LGAO Contribution and two (2) additional applicants that did not submit their application by the deadline date. The applications were reviewed and scored by a panel consisting of Ms. Ramirez, a representative of Department of Public Works, and Utilities Department Director. PACE was ultimately selected by this panel. PACE will be applying for Florida Housing Finance Corporation funding, but this can be denied. If so, our contribution will not need be paid. If their application is awarded, our contribution would be in form of a loan.

Mr. Campbell further explained PACE requested \$340,000 from SHIP, and this will be the amount paid back via loan if they do get approved. PACE will be building 96 units, and 10 units will be specifically for non-elderly special needs. The building site is near County Line Road, and in a good location near a

hospital, grocery stores, and more. PACE also waived their ability to apply for the property tax exemption afforded by the Live Local Act for Affordable Housing.

Mr. Campbell mentioned there is frustration with Hernando County being associated with Tampa Bay Area regarding income, as they do not align. He stated this has been an ongoing conversation with Tallahassee to reconsider the way Hernando County is grouped with surrounding areas when it comes to income.

Mr. Wilson asked about Hernando County's median income being grouped with Citrus and Sumter County's median income versus the southern County's income we are currently grouped with. Mr. Wilson explained Hernando aligns more with the northern counties when it comes to income versus the southern counties and asked how we can be grouped with the north instead of the south. Ms. Ramirez stated our office has been looking into that and it is complicated because we cannot just remove ourselves from the Tampa/St. Pete MSA. The process is statistical one established by the Federal Government based on census data. Ms. Ramirez stated when it comes to other programs and data, being an entitlement county, we do align more with Tampa/St. Pete MSA and not Citrus County.

New Business:

Ms. Burris discussed the progression in the SHIP program. There have been 4 closings for Down Payment Assistance in July, 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. Additionally, our office is working with You Thrive on an application for the new non-profit construction strategy on a property they are building on Melbourne Street.

Ms. Burris continued the discussion and provided the new member(s) with the AHAC responsibilities, meeting dates, and Sunshine Law. Additionally, Ms. Burris has provided all members with the Local Housing Incentive Strategies needing review for the upcoming BOCC meeting in November. These strategies will be discussed at the next AHAC meeting prior to going to the BOCC. Then once the BOCC reviews the strategies, they will be presented to the State of Florida. Ms. Burris has posted all documents to the AHAC website.

Ms. Ramirez stated on Tuesday, August 12th our office took our incentive policy in front of the BOCC. This policy was previously presented to AHAC. The BOCC did grant our office permission to move forward with creating an incentive policy. The expedited permitting process was approved as well.

Informational: The Septic to Sewer program was mentioned, and there is still discussion between our office and utilities on the cost and payment from these homeowners going through the first phase of the Septic to Sewer plan.

The meeting adjourned at 10:37 a.m.