

AGENDA

The meeting was in person, with the public in attendance. The public was also able to view the meeting via Zoom Webinar.

Committee Members Present

Amanda Edwards, Brownie Newman, Parker Sloan

County Staff Present

Jennifer Barnette, Matthew Cable, Brandon Freeman, William High, Andrew Mayronne, Nate Pennington, Amanda Stratton, Sybil Tate, and Don Warn

Call to Order & Welcome

- Chairman Newman called the meeting to order at 1:09 PM
- Commissioner Sloan motioned to approve the agenda and minutes from the previous meeting. The agenda and minutes from the previous meeting were approved unanimously

New Business

- Affordable Housing Land Regulations Overview - Nate Pennington
 - Mr. Pennington presented an overview on comprehensive planning and zoning, and how the upcoming comprehensive plan will be affected by existing state code.
 - Comm. Sloan asked for clarity on when some of the zoning regulations presented were put in place. Comm. Sloan additionally asked about the legal strength of using in-lieu development fees.
 - Chair Newman asked about the feasibility of inclusionary zoning prior to the adoption of the comprehensive plan. Chairman Newman recognized that to move more quickly to create conditional zoning, there would have to be an amendment to the existing plan.
 - Ms. Tate added that a key element of the comprehensive plan is public input, which would include developer input as well.
 - Comm. Edwards asked whether inclusionary zoning applies to zoning, and is there a way to utilize fair housing to reach the committees goals without using inclusionary zoning. Mr. Freeman explained that this is something of a gray area at the moment. Mr. Freeman said that the County would likely have to wait until the completion of the comprehensive plan in order to create new programs to aid the promotion of affordable programs.
 - Mr. Pennington added there have been challenges to the county's zoning decisions that were not a part of the comprehensive plan.
 - Chair Newman asked about Fair Housing impacts. Ms. Tate explained potential impacts of rental vs. purchase decisions, as performed by Chapel Hill. Mr. Cable added procedural details of public impact, but also how to determine the rate of affordable units per project. The public input would be critical to determining the use and procedure of these projects.
 - Chair Newman remarked that these strategies could provide a similar number of new AH units as the current building programs provide. Mr. Mayronne added that the programs available can be used as one of a variety of programs to achieve affordable housing goals.
 - Mr. Cable added that discussion of counties using inclusionary zoning runs into an issue of proximity to additional services needed by many people who would benefit by affordable housing.
- 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credit Case Studies – Andrew Mayronne

- Comm. Sloan asked whether the housing product was mostly similar among the compared projects. Mr. Mayronne confirmed that most projects in the 4% LIHTC projects are similar, with 3 or 4 story buildings, driven mostly by cost.
- Comm. Sloan asked about the local projects that have occurred here, and the local capacity to meet similar goals.
- Chair Newman asked for clarity on how financing is structured with 4% projects, and whether it is more of a grant or low interest loan. He additionally asked for clarity on loan repayment scenarios that would leverage the lending position of the county's finances.
- Comm. Sloan asked the Chair about the ability to use county loans to promote potentially revenue neutral programs.
- Chair Newman asked for case studies on the financing terms for LIHTC programs around the state. Mr. Cable explained that due to the funding structures available to the county, the loans are really 22-24 year terms, and therefore the projects investigated should be slightly older (e.g. 2018) as these projects would have completed construction and received the entirety of their award.
- Comm. Edwards asked what the pitfalls of the 4% projects are. Mr. Mayronne explained the risks are relatively low, but the upfront money is always an issue. Mr. Pennington added that staff capacity can additionally be an issue.
- Goal Setting – Sybil Tate & Amanda Stratton
 - Chair Newman asked about the goal development from Wake County, but Ms. Tate explained there was little information available.
 - Chair Newman asked for clarity on the housing gap estimates in Buncombe County. Mr. Cable explained the information, which came from the Bowen Report, was provided prior to the pandemic. Chair Newman expressed a view that the numbers seemed too low, and the staff provided a variety of explanations for context.
 - The committee expressed priorities for the strategic plan goals to staff.
 - Chair Newman explained there should be an analysis of available publicly owned land that could more easily be developed. He added that goals should be ambitious but achievable.
 - Comm. Edwards did not have precise numbers to accompany the analysis, but added her numbers were smaller than the other two committee members.
 - Chair Newman expressed learning more about leveraging the County's access to cheap financing. He added the opportunity provided by providing more cost efficient and smaller units.
 - Chair Newman asked what the current home ownership goal was. Mr. Pennington explained that the existing plan used broad goals for affordable housing, with slightly different goals and themes than the county are focused on today.
 - Comm. Edwards expressed interest in learning more about workforce housing.
 - Comm. Sloan asked for information on the project Auburn University's Rural Studio is working on with CHCMC in Madison County.
 - Chair Newman asked for more information on homelessness, and underhoused groups.
 - Chair Newman expressed enthusiasm for inclusionary zoning, and that the benefits outweighed the costs. He added that in-lieu fees would be acceptable to him.
 - Comm. Sloan added support for the inclusionary zoning as a method of negotiating and working with various community partners.

- Comm. Edwards expressed openness of learning more, but added the need to have a more comprehensive view of the effects of inclusionary zoning. She added that the county could be challenged legally.
- The committee expressed support for learning more about vouchers as the next conversation.

Next Steps

- The Committee expressed support for conducting meetings with the public attending in person.

Announcements

Public Comment

- Public comment – no public comment was received prior to the meeting.
- Public comments received via Zoom text were shared with the committee. Comments were received from Scott Dedman, Margie Bukowski, and Geoffrey Barton.

Adjourn

- The committee adjourned at 2:58.

Documents

- Presentation
- August 3, 2021 Minutes