

Lee County Recovery Task Force Attainable & Resilient Housing Workshop

Session 2 – Meeting Minutes

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM | JUNE 9, 2023 | COLLABORATORY | 2031 JACKSON STREET, SUITE 100, FORT MYERS, FL 33901 | LAND USE POLICY AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

Call to Order

On June 9, 2023, the Workshop facilitators, Jon Romine and Terry Ware, convened the Attainable & Resilient Housing Workshop: Land Use Policy and Innovative Solutions at 11:07 AM with the following panelists present:

- Pam Keyes
- Nelson Taylor
- Amy Yearsley
- Frank Wells
- John Talmage
- Jason Krejci
- Paula McMichael
- Mary Gibbs
- Jacqueline Genson
- Tamara Pigott
- Brett Pelletier

The following Branch members were present:

- Steve Belden
- Kevin Besserer
- Fred Forbes
- Phyllis Calloway
- Lee Ford
- Dan O'Berski
- Marco Villalobos

- Stephanie Wardein
- Jennifer Hagen
- Garry Griffin
- Marion Briggs
- Therese Everly
- Richard Durling
- Sharon Woodberry
- Chris Simoneau

Workshop Topic Discussion

Mr. Ware asked what the barriers were in developing attainable housing in Lee County and the municipalities as identified. The following was stated:

- Southwest Florida was marketed differently when it was first developed;
- There are barriers in the development of housing;
- An increase in multi-family populations have put pressure on the infrastructure system;
- There has been an increase in a remote economy in certain regions;
- The population has been growing faster than anticipated;
- Newer developments have been used for short-term rentals;
- There has been a focus on how to change laws, but should be a change of mindset in the community;
- Closer employee housing can reduce commute times; and
- Need to figure out how to relieve pressure points.

Mr. Ware asked what techniques other communities used to talk about development. The answers were as followed:

- Tampa Bay launched a compact of different cities to focus on affordable housing for the county;
- Using a pattern book to visually show what the area will look like;
- Educating people that are weary of development;
- Telling a story of why and what the needs are for development;
- Adopting a form-based code, similar to that of Bonita Springs, to cut approval times for developers;
- Having a conversation about what density means;
- Addressing policy and barriers, and connecting with communities;
- Assessing and defining the needs of the community;

- Having consistency and data to make informed decisions;
- Addressing stigmas through education [of leaders and officials];
- Educating official and elected leaders about policy decisions;
- Identifying the workforce to find accommodations for the city; and
- Portraying a positive vision of development.

Mr. Romine asked if there was an opportunity to have a cross-jurisdictional conversation to discuss the future. The panelists discussed the following:

- Ensuring community support for projects that are getting approved;
- Have more discussions on a regional level to share best practices;
- Using GIS to analyze data to show where things need to go;
- Communicating with residents about solutions and other concerns (such as water);
- Ensuring the community that the build-back will be done so in a responsible way;
- Asset mapping can help determine overlays and pressure points in certain regions/jurisdictions;
- Education is key;
- Reducing the language barriers across the sectors and the community; having a universal language;
- A review of environmental remediation needs and funding opportunities;
- Ensuring people are empowered to be a part of conversations; and
- Reminding elected officials of their obligations to the communities.

Mr. Ware stated that when new developments come in, the response is an increase in traffic. He asked how to create expectations to pay for it. Additionally, what land use policies should address the issues with development, and how to manage expectations. The panelists suggested the following:

- People move to the region with pre-existing mindsets, which can be a challenge;
- A shift in how problems are thought about and considered;
- Addressing barriers with accessory dwelling units, building codes, flooding zones, cost of building, etc.;
- Engaging commercial zoning for a decrease in traffic and increase in workforce housing; and
- Supporting affordable housing.

Mr. Ware asked how Hurricane Ian impacted land use policy. Ms. Hagen said there was a push to work together post-hurricane to build back and work together. She said there is a needed conversation to bring back points that were made in the past.

Mr. Giraldo asked how many of the municipal entities have a vision for transportation that supports multi-use transportation and a network that will support future mixed-use developments. She asked if there was an updated parking study to think about parking in a particular area.

Ms. Yearsley said Cape Coral was undergoing a multimodal study for transportation and there has been a shift in focus. Mr. Griffin underscored the importance of educating people about what the build-back will be like.

Ms. Pigott stated that the land use policy will impact the affordability of housing and insurance.

It was also suggested that buying back some of the areas could help with housing affordability.

Mr. Ware asked how to keep the vulnerable populations in the community with infrastructure and land use policies so there is no loss. He stated that this would push the issue of regional planning.

Mr. Romine asked what the municipalities were willing to put out on the table about an initiative for land use policy, following Hurricane Ian. The responses were as follows:

- Communicating with elected officials to start the conversation about common interests and goals;
- Looking beyond the immediate issues; and
- Looking at housing elements and plans.

Next Steps and Questions

There were no next steps or further questions discussed.

Public Comment

Jessica Turner said there is a need for a more unified conversation on planning and moving forward with affordable housing in the area.

Kyle Doran suggested putting forward positive information campaigns.

Mike Love stated that affordable housing can change the community dynamic, therefore they should be in the conversations.

Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Mr. Romine thanked all members and panelists for their participation. The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 AM on June 9, 2023.