

Housing Branch- Lee County Recovery Task Force

Meeting Minutes

12:30 PM | APRIL 4, 2023 | COLLABORATORY | 2031 JACKSON STREET, SUITE 100, FORT MYERS, FL 33901 | PUBLIC MEETING

Call to Order

At 12:30 PM on April 4th, 2023, Mr. Gary Griffin, Branch Lead, convened the Housing Branch meeting with the following members present:

- Gray Griffin – Lead
- Millie Babic (on behalf of Amy Yearsley)
- Diana Giraldo
- Kevin Besserer
- Chris Simoneau
- Jan-Erik Hustrulid
- Marcia Davis
- Marion Briggs
- Bradley Alix
- Richard Durling
- Dan O'Berski

Facilitators and Branch Support:

- Terry Mazany
- Jon Romine
- Robbie Heere

Introductions

Branch Members went around the room introducing themselves before Jon Romine, the Branch facilitator, began the presentation. Mr. Romine began the conversation on how this meeting will be a discussion on the research and data to inform the priorities and solutions that will be developed in the recovery and resilience planning process.

Updates from the Recovery Task Force Meeting

Staff provided an update of the work of the Recovery Task Force during the month of March. This included an update of the most recent Recovery Task Force meeting, the On The Table event and information on upcoming community engagement events. Mr. Griffin stressed the importance of engaging the community and gaining their support and feedback to achieve the best results.

Overview of Branch Problem-Solving Process

Mr. Romine presented an overview of the problem-solving process including a review of the branch workshops concept to engage subject matter experts. The members discussed the following additional priorities:

- Narrowing, refining, and validating priorities:
 - Entanglements resulting in overlap in other branches;
 - Importance of housing to workforce;
 - Emergent and short-term issues;
- Addressing unmet needs:
 - Review of Unmet Needs committee;
 - Localized housing solutions;
 - Policy and regulatory solutions;
 - Attending recovery task force meeting for public insight;
 - Planning for temporary housing and trailers;

Research and Data Presentation and Discussion

Mr. Romine presented a review of the relevant research and data for each priority grouping identified by the Branch. The research and data were prepared by staff. The following topics were discussed:

- Research priorities:

- Infill markets;
- Underwriting and subsidizing affordable housing;
- Legislative changes from 2023 Senate Bill 102;
- Minimum vs maximum square footage changes over time;
 - Dollars per square foot;
- HUD determined vs. actual market housing rates;
- Data Presentation and Discussion:
 - Public workshop with all municipalities;
 - Attended by subject matter experts
 - Regular branch meetings focused on validating information;
- Members discussed additional priorities that should be included:
 - Architectural and housing design standards and the effect on housing costs;
 - Impact fee deferral pilot programs that exist across the county;
 - Accessory dwelling unit regulations;
 - Gap funding for affordable housing units;
 - Community land trusts;
 - Employer assisted housing units;
 - Linkage fees and employer role in paying these fees;
 - Long term strategies in engaging the various groups for affordable and attainable housing in the region;
 - Adding location and transportation regionalism;
 - Commercial design standards;
 - Aesthetic requirements and cost of production;
 - Funding gap for rentals;
 - Changing impact fees.
- Members suggested engaging the following subject matter experts:
 - Lee County Human and Veterans Services Director;
 - Permitting department heads for the County and Municipalities;
 - An expert on 2023 Senate Bill 102.

Mr. Griffin and the members identified the delay in the anticipated backlog of permitting as an emergent issue. They recommended the Recovery Task Force streamline and shorten the time frame for rebuild timeline bureaucratic process for issuing permits to rebuild housing.

Public Comment

Ms. Betsy Haesemeyer commented on the need to clarify the short- term, mid- term and long- term process for recovering from Hurricane Ian.

Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Mr. Griffin thanked the Branch Members for attending and adjourned the meeting at 2:05 PM on April 4, 2023.