

## Orange County Affordable Housing Advisory Board Minutes

Tuesday, January 11, 2021 at 6:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

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**Members Present:** Jenn Sykes (Chair), Allison Mahaley, Arthur Sprinczeles, Jim Eichel, Dion Graham, Mae McLendon, Olivia Fisher, Paul Voss, Saru Salvi

**Members Absent:** Holly Meschko, Keith Cook, Tim Woody

**Staff Present:** Corey Root (Housing Director), Erika Brandt (Community Development Manager), Maria Dewees (Community Development Specialist),

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### I. Call to Order/Introductions:

Chair Sykes called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

### II. Approval of the November 9, 2021 and December 14, 2021 AHAB Meeting Minutes

The board unanimously approved the minutes from [November](#) and [December](#).

### III. Board Member Updates:

Chair Sykes announced that there were reports of four Housing Choice Voucher holders in Hillsborough receiving eviction notices on Christmas. She also noted that the Town of Hillsborough has revised an ordinance to allow for more multifamily housing units per acre of land and create a density bonus for affordable housing. She is unsure if any developments have been proposed under the new ordinance.

### IV. Housing Department Updates

Ms. Root shared Housing Department updates. The Housing Helpline has started in-person hours on Tuesday and Thursdays in Chapel Hill. In 2021, the Housing Helpline served over 6,500 unique households.

The Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness (OCPEH) inherited a hotel isolation program for people experiencing homelessness who have Covid. Since OCPEH began coordinating in mid-December 2021, the program has served 17 people. IFC shelters, like other places in the County, have had cases of Covid, and cannot accept new clients. OCPEH is also running an emergency hoteling program. The annual [Point-in-Time Count](#) will take place at the end of January.

Ms. McLendon asked what more can be done to house people this winter and if government buildings could be used. Ms. Root replied that staff have been

discussing the possibility of using one of the community centers. Staff hope the hotel program will be very short term, but positive cases at the shelter continue.

The FY22-23 HOME Program application is open and applications are due in February. The HOME-ARP draft allocation plan is in progress and staff will bring a draft to the Board of Commissioners (BOCC) in the coming months. Staff propose combining the HOME-ARP application cycle with the HOME FY23-24 application. There will be opportunities for further feedback from community members and service providers on the plan this spring.

The State HOPE Program closed in December. The Orange County Emergency Housing Assistance Program continues to serve county residents in need.

The Longtime Homeowner Assistance Program closed in December. The program served 91 households and distributed over \$16,000 in assistance. Staff are recommending the BOCC modify the program design, if the Board chooses to continue the program.

The Orange County Housing Authority currently has 572 Housing Choice Vouchers under lease. Another 51 vouchers have been issued, with voucher holders currently in the housing search stage.

The Eviction Diversion Program has moved to the Housing Department. The program has two staff positions: an attorney and an expeditor.

Mr. Voss asked Ms. Root to clarify how the SOHRAD program works. Ms. Root explained that SOHRAD staff connect directly with community members who are unsheltered, and also facilitate deflection from the criminal justice system. The program has served 250 people from its start in October 2020 through December 2021. Ms. McClendon requested SOHRAD contact cards. Ms. Mahaley asked if the AHAB could collect supplies for SOHRAD. Ms. Root will share a list of needed items. SOHRAD partners with the Chapel Hill Crisis Unit, who has more storage space.

Ms. Sykes asked if AHAB members could help with the Point-in-Time Count. Ms. Root replied that volunteers have helped in the past; however, last year and this year, due to Covid, volunteers are not involved.

Ms. Mahaley asked if the Department could host a workshop for property owners to encourage them to lease to voucher holders. Ms. Root replied that the Department held a landlord briefing recently and hopes to host more of these events semi-annually or quarterly. Ms. Salvi suggested inviting landlords to share their positive experiences with one another during the events.

## **V. Finalization and Approval of the 2022 Annual Work Plan:**

Ms. Sykes shared the Annual Work Plan and requested feedback. Ms. McLendon asked to add a section stating the AHAB will invite community partner agencies to attend meetings to provide updates on work they do with County funds.

Ms. Salvi supports keeping the goals broad. She suggested eliminating the December meeting and not meeting if quorum is not met. Ms. Sykes noted that this

board struggles with meeting quorum; as long as voting matters are moved to a later meeting with quorum, meeting without quorum should continue.

Mr. Voss asked the AHAB to consider focusing on specific issues, such as manufactured home park closure. He would like to contribute to this initiative and to connect with ROC USA. Ms. Sykes noted that in years past, there was a mobile home work group dedicated to this issue. Ms. Root noted that staff works with the Orange County Affordable Housing Coalition Mobile Home Committee.

The AHAB unanimously approved the Annual Work Plan.

#### **VI. FY21-22 Outside Agency Updates:**

Ms. Dewees updated members on FY21-22 Outside Agency performance reports for Quarters 1 and 2 (due January 10). Each year, nonprofit organizations delivering vital programs/services apply for funding from Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Orange County. Advisory boards review applications. In FY21-22, the County funded:

- Center for Community Self Help: \$50,000
- Community Empowerment Fund: \$23,824
- Community Home Trust: \$211,912
- EmPOWERment: \$40,000
- Habitat for Humanity: \$76,133
- Rebuilding Together: \$15,000

Ms. Mahaley asked staff to upload FY22-23 applications to Google Drive. Mr. Graham asked if the County's racial equity tool would be used to review applications. Ms. Dewees was unsure, but staff are very interested in using the tool once it is available.

#### **VII. Board Vacancy and Recruitment Update**

Ms. Dewees reported that Housing staff have reached out about recruitment through OCPEH's network, to Orange County Justice United, and to nonprofit affordable housing owners and developers. Many have included information about the board vacancies in announcements to their members and residents. Staff request AHAB members' support recruiting new members, as there have been no new applications. Ms. McLendon requested a blurb about the AHAB to share with potential members. Ms. Malahey requested a flyer to distribute. Ms. McLendon asked if staff have confirmed all current applicants are still interested. Ms. Dewees replied that the clerk's office recently contacted each applicant to confirm their continued interest.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 7:04 PM.

**NAME OF BOARD/COMMISSION:** Affordable Housing Advisory Board (AHAB)

**Report Period:** January 2021-December 2021

**ORANGE COUNTY ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS  
ANNUAL REPORT/ WORK PLAN FOR THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

The Board of Commissioners appreciates the dedication of all the volunteers on their boards and commissions and welcomes input from various advisory boards and commissions throughout the year. Please complete the following information, limited to the front and back of this form. Other background materials may be provided as a supplement to, but not as a substitute for, this form.

Board/Commission Name: **Affordable Housing Advisory Board (AHAB)**

Person to address the BOCC and contact information:

**Jenn Sykes, Chair**  
**(919) 442-8152**  
[sykes.jennifer@gmail.com](mailto:sykes.jennifer@gmail.com)

Primary County Staff Contact:

**Corey Root**  
**Director, Department of Housing and Community Development**  
**(919) 245-2490**  
[croot@orangecountync.gov](mailto:croot@orangecountync.gov)

How many times per month does this board/commission meet, including any special meetings and sub-committee meetings?

**Generally, the AHAB meets once a month, excluding the month of July. The Board may elect to have two meetings during March or April in order to review the applications relating to the County's Outside Agencies Funding Program. The AHAB may also meet additional times during a month depending on need or as it sees fit in order to carry out its work. Regular meeting locations alternate between Hillsborough and Chapel Hill. In 2019, the AHAB began to schedule some meetings in locations throughout the County in order to increase accessibility to all Orange County residents interested in attending.**

**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Orange County Board of Commissioners created a policy allowing Advisory Boards to meet virtually during the pandemic if and when extenuating circumstances make it necessary for a Board to meet.**

**The AHAB did not hold regular monthly meetings, but only met on an as-needed basis, for the first part of 2021. Regular monthly meetings (virtual) resumed in August.**

Brief Statement of Board/Commission's Assigned Charge and Responsibilities.

**The Affordable Housing Advisory Board is to advise the Orange County Board of Commissioners (BOCC) on affordable housing issues and work to increase the community's awareness of, understanding of, commitment to and involvement in producing and maintaining sustainable affordable housing. The AHAB also explores new and/or innovative affordable housing strategies and new funding opportunities in order to make cogent recommendations to the BOCC, and monitors the progress of local housing programs.**

**The AHAB participates in the review of housing-related applications for the annual Outside Agencies Funding Process. In 2021, the AHAB also reviewed and made funding recommendations to the BOCC for the 2021 Affordable Housing Bond Program.**

What are your Board/Commission's most important accomplishments?

**In 2021, the AHAB's notable accomplishments include the following:**

- **Reviewed and scored housing-related applications for the annual Outside Agencies Funding Process.**
- **Developed a standardized PowerPoint presentation that can be used by AHAB members at community meetings.**
- **Board members helped promote local regulatory changes to advance affordable housing (e.g., the density bonus considered by the Town of Hillsborough Planning Board).**
- **Board members promoted increased awareness of and communication with local groups and organizations by attending their meetings and reporting back to the AHAB at their regularly scheduled meetings; members attended meetings of the Partnership to End Homelessness, EmPOWERment, Community Empowerment Fund, Town of Hillsborough Planning Board, and the Town of Hillsborough Water and Sewer Board.**

List of Specific Tasks, Events, or Functions Performed or Sponsored Annually.

- **Review and provide comments on the Annual Action Plan and Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) for the County's federal HOME funds.**
- **Monitor accomplishments of the Affordable Housing Bond and other**

**County housing programs.**

- **Review Outside Funding applications from organizations providing housing services.**
- **Educate the community on affordable housing needs and resources and related partnerships with the towns, public agencies, nonprofits, civic and for-profit organizations. This is primarily done informally by individual members through their civic engagement activities in their respective communities.**

Describe this board/commission's activities/accomplishments in carrying out BOCC goal(s)/priorities, if applicable.

**The AHAB advises on and supports the BOCC's affordable housing initiatives, goals and priorities. The tasks, activities and events described in the preceding sections of this report and annual work plan support the BOCC's established goal to *ensure a community network of basic human services and infrastructure that maintains, protects and promotes the well-being of all County residents* and the priorities of providing decent, standard housing options for all residents regardless of household income level. The AHAB may also develop explicit plans to inform bond expenditures and other BOCC affordable housing funding.**

Describe the collaboration relationship(s) this particular board has with other advisory boards and commissions?

**The AHAB hopes to work more closely with the Affordable Housing Advisory Boards in the Towns of Carrboro and Chapel Hill, and with the Orange County Local Government Affordable Housing Collaborative. The AHAB will also work with the nonprofit partners in the housing space to support their missions and evaluate any work they do using county funds.**

Identify any activities this board/commission expects to carry out in 2022 as they relate to established BOCC goals and priorities. If applicable, is there a fiscal impact (i.e., funding, staff time, other resources) associated with these proposed activities (please list).

- **Increase interaction with community groups working on housing and related issues (e.g., criminal justice resources, immigrant/refugee resources).**
- **Increase Board member participation in affordable housing marches and other outreach events.**
- **Increase Board member support of fundraising efforts by local housing nonprofits.**

- **Increase Board involvement in local discussions around the Greene Tract, mobile home park closures, and filling the homeless services gaps.**
- **Align the Board's work with the countywide racial equity plan coming in 2022.**

What are the concerns or emerging issues your board has identified for the upcoming year that it plans to address, or wishes to bring to the Commissioners' attention?

- **Greene Tract**
- **Manufactured Home Park Closures**
- **Filling the Homeless Services Gaps**