MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL HOUSING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, August 13, 2024 – 3:45 PM
City Hall Council Chambers

Members Present:	Aaron Baker, Vice Chair, City Council Member Victor Foster, Citizen Member Mayor Maureen Copelof, Ex-Officio
Members Absent:	Pamela Holder, Chair, City Council Member
Staff Present:	Wilson Hooper, City Manager Dean Luebbe, Assistant City Manager/Finance Director Emily Brewer, Planner Becky McCann, Communications Coordinator Denise Hodsdon, City Clerk
Guest:	Sara VanLear, DFI

A. Welcome and Call to Order

Aaron Baker welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:46 PM.

B. Certification of Quorum

Quorum was certified by City Clerk Denise Hodsdon.

C. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Baker asked to remove Item E. Update on BDRPC Project and to add Public Comment as Item F. Mr. Foster moved, seconded by Mr. Baker to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Approval of Minutes – June 11, 2024 Meeting

Mr. Foster moved, seconded by Mr. Baker to approve the minutes of the June 11, 2024 meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Property Disposition Strategy

Mr. Hooper explained that one of the ways governments have been encouraged to support affordable housing has been to do an inventory of the properties that they own

and to dispose of those they don't need, whether that is via a gift or low-cost sale to an affordable housing developer, or a sale to a market-rate buyer and using those proceeds to fund affordable housing. He asked Ms. Brewer to present information on some of the properties that the city owns and asked for the committee's recommendation on possible disposal of those properties. Ms. Brewer presented a PowerPoint presentation that included four city-owned properties and how we might be able to dispose of these unused properties that are unsuitable for larger housing development, through a competitive sale to fund future affordable housing initiatives. Staff believes by moving forward with this strategy we would be able to address two important goals: it supports our ongoing affordable housing programs and initiatives by getting additional funding in the Housing Trust Fund, but also makes it so that we can pursue additional projects that create new affordable units. Staff has identified the following four properties for the committee's consideration:

1. James Street – the property is located next to the intersection of James St. and W. Main St. This was initially donated to the City for the purpose of creating housing and the previous Housing Committee had recommended giving the property to Habitat for Humanity, but due to some issues with the title, Habitat was not interested in the property. The City Attorney is working on clearing the title and staff believes the property would be a great candidate for competitive sale.

2. Cashiers Valley Road – 8.8 acre parcel located next to Public Works. The Public Works Director has indicated that he would need a ½ to 1-acre portion of this property for future expansion, which would still leave a significant amount of land for competitive sale. This parcel was initially acquired for affordable housing purposes but has been reviewed by DFI and was deemed unsuitable for a large affordable housing project as it would be cost-prohibitive due to the steep slopes and the Duke utility easement that runs along the front of the property. There is still development potential for this property, just not for affordable housing.

3. Cashiers Valley Road – a 1.37 acre parcel located on the other side of the Public Works site. The property is currently split-zoned and located partially in the ETJ so it would most likely need to be fully annexed into the city limits and possibly a rezoning to increase the density to GR8.

4. A vacant lot by the Tannery – a .85 acre parcel currently zoned as Institutional Campus. The greenway will go along the eastern edge of the property and we may need some of the parcel for access to the greenway. It was initially discussed as a parking lot or entry point for the greenway, but with all the improvements that have been made to that area and the parking lot now there, staff believe it could have a higher use.

Following discussion Mr. Baker said he would prefer to keep the larger Cashiers Valley Road lot and the Tannery lot until we explore and exhaust all possibilities. He said he would be interested in hearing what Habitat or Housing Assistance Corp. would say about a smaller-scale affordable development for the Tannery parcel. Mr. Foster

moved, seconded by Mr. Baker to recommend disposal of the James Street property and the smaller Cashiers Valley Road lot pending outstanding issues being resolved. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hooper recommended that even if we don't end up selling the Tannery parcel and the larger Cashiers Valley Road parcel, it would be beneficial to go ahead and carve off and reserve the property that we need from both parcels now.

F. Public Comment

John Roberts introduced himself as a new resident and said he is interested in learning more about the city's efforts to look at affordable housing.

Mayor Copelof reported that she attended the WNC Housing Summit last week and brought back information and some ideas of how to use some of our housing funds.

G. Set Date for Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is to be determined.

H. Closed Session

At 4:44 pm Mr. Foster moved, seconded by Mr. Wise to enter closed session to discuss a property acquisition matter. The motion carried unanimously. Authorized to remain for the closed session with committee members were City Manager Wilson Hooper, City Clerk Denise Hodsdon, Senior Planner Emily Brewer, and Sara Van Lear of DFI.

At 5:05 pm the committee resumed the meeting in open session. No official action was taken in closed session and the minutes of the closed session are authorized to be sealed.

I. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm.

Minutes Approved: September 9, 2024

X Aaron J Baker

Aaron Baker
City Council Member

X Denise Hodsdon

Denise Hodsdon
City Clerk