CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG

HOUSING, LAND USE, & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

July 16, 2020 @ 10:50 a.m.

Welcome to the City of St. Petersburg City Council Housing, Land Use & Transportation Committee Meeting. The agenda and supporting documents are available on the City’s website at www.stpete.org/meetings or by emailing city.clerk@stpete.org.

NOTE: City buildings are closed to the public for meetings due to the COVID-19 emergency. Accordingly, the meeting location has been changed from in-person to a “virtual” meeting by means of communications media technology pursuant to Executive Order Number 20-69, issued by the Governor on March 20, 2020, and Executive Order 2020-30 issued by the Mayor on July 8, 2020.

The public can attend the meeting in the following ways:
- Watch live on Channel 15 WOW!/Channel 641 Spectrum/Channel 20 Frontier FiOS
- Watch live online at WWW.stpete.org/TV
- Watch/listen on your computer, mobile phone, or other device by visiting the following link: https://zoom.us/j/94837595763
- Listen by dialing one of the following phone numbers and entering Meeting ID: 948 3759 5763#
  - +1 312 626 6799 or
  - +1 646 876 9923 or
  - +1 253 215 8782 or
  - +1 301 715 8592 or
  - +1 346 248 7799 or
  - +1 669 900 6833
City of St. Petersburg
Housing, Land Use & Transportation Committee
Agenda
July 16, 2020 at 10:50 a.m.

Members: Chair Amy Foster, Vice Chair Brandi Gabbard, Darden Rice, Gina Driscoll

Alternate: Robert Blackmon

Support Staff: Reneé Long (Legislative Aide)

A. Call to Order

B. Approval of Agenda

C. Approval of May 14, 2020 Minutes

D. New Business
   1. Gateway Master Plan and MOU
      ~ Chistina Mendoza, Principal Planner, Forward Pinellas
      ~ Whit Blanton, Executive Director, Forward Pinellas
   2. State of Evictions in West Central Florida
      ~ Duggan Cooley, Pinellas Community Foundation

E. Adjourn

Next Meeting:
   • August 13, 2020

Attachments:
   • St. Petersburg Gateway Master Plan Presentation
   • The Looming Storm: The State of Evictions in West Central Florida
City of St. Petersburg
Housing, Land Use & Transportation
Report
May 14, 2020 at 1:30 p.m.
Zoom Webinar

Present: Chair Amy Foster, Vice Chair Brandi Gabbard, Robert Blackmon, Gina Driscoll, Darden Rice.

Absent: None

Also Present: Council Member Deborah Figgs-Sanders, Council Member Lisa Wheeler-Bowman, Deputy Mayor Kanika Tomalin, Rob Gerdes, Tom Greene, Stephanie Lampe, Joshua Johnson, and Brad Tennant.

Support Staff: Renée Long – Legislative Aide

New Business Multi Family Affordable Housing Update
Senior Housing Development Coordinator, Stephanie Lampe, gave an update on five multi-family affordable housing developments. The first was Skyway Lofts. They have been awarded funding and their construction plans are currently in permitting. They have an extension request on the May 21, 2020 Council agenda. The next development, The Shores, was awarded $11 million and will be starting the process of underwriting and approvals.

The Butterfly Apartments is 20 units of supportive housing for persons with special needs and state funding has been awarded.

Whispering Pines is a property that is owned by Boley and PAL on 54th Avenue South. Ms. Lampe said the Florida Housing Board is not recommending Whispering Pines for approval. They may apply next year or look for another funding source.

The Innovare is a development by Volunteers of America and Ms. Lampe indicated that they have been hoping to have a Volunteers of America development in St. Pete. Staff review at the state level seems to indicate that they will be recommending Approval.

Gabbard mentioned that on the Volunteers of America project it states 50 units, 70% for formerly homeless. Committee Vice Chair Gabbard asked what the other 30% are for? Ms. Lampe stated it is a mix of 25 one-bedroom and 25-two bedroom and the other units are for a variety of 60% of AMI, 50%, and 80%. She believes it is a mixture of the other 30% but would need to double check. Committee Vice Chair Gabbard additionally asked if everything was 80% and below. Ms. Lampe replied that is correct.

Mortgage, Rental and Utility Assistance Update
Housing and Community Development Director, Joshua Johnson, shared a mortgage, rental and utility assistance update. The new funding is due to the Coronavirus public health pandemic. The City is scheduled to receive $1,100,945 of CDBG and $539,562 of ESG funding. The ESG funding will be brought before council on May 21, 2020. Mr. Johnson indicated that the CDBG funding will be presented to council on June 4, 2020 so that an amendment to the annual action plan can be conducted.

Mr. Johnson indicated that of the $1,100,945 of CDBG, there will be a rental/utility assistance strategy for households whose income is at /<80% AMI. That will be $100,000 of CDBG. The cost to implement the program is $17,614. There will be a mortgage/utility assistance program which will be implemented in-
house, budgeted at $400,000. Mr. Johnson stated they have funding for agencies, which the applications are out now requesting responses for $380,756. Catholic Charities and Boley Centers will split the amount assist households with rental/utility assistance for households at $/<=50% AMI immediately. That is budgeted at a little over $400,000. The SHIP program also received an additional $88,635. Mr. Johnson shared that they had approximately $100,000 that was not utilized so they are going to tie it in with this. That is going to be used for the mortgage/utility assistance program so the mortgage program will have approximately $580,000 and the rental programs having about $550,000 in assistance.

Mr. Robert Gerdes thanked the committee for having the meeting today. The additional CDBG and ESG funding is a big item for them at the upcoming May 21, 2020, council meeting so he felt it was a great opportunity for them to come before the committee and lay out plan for the money and answer any questions in advance of the meeting. Mr. Gerdes complimented Mr. Johnson and his team. Their loan production in April of this year is greater than their loan production in April of last year, which is amazing considering the circumstances that they are under. Committee Vice Chair Gabbard said she was relieved to see a large portion designated for utility assistance. She shared a call she had with Mr. Tom Greene and Ms. Tammy Jerome regarding the utility bill issue and the potential impacts for residents. She asked if the committee would want Ms. Jerome to update Council on the number of individuals who may be delinquent who have not reached out yet regarding payment plans. She thinks it would be beneficial for all Council to hear and asked if the committee would be interested in requesting the item as a formal presentation from administration. Chair Foster agreed that it would be a good idea to get some information on that. Committee Chair Foster asked to review the referral list. There are two items on the list, both from Committee Vice Chair Gabbard.

Mr. Gerdes stated the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee is scheduled to have a meeting next week so they can come back in June and give an update on that meeting. Regarding the employer-assisted housing program for city staff, they will need more time to get back to that issue. Committee Vice Chair Gabbard asked that the employer-assisted housing program remain on the referral list. Chair Foster asked if there were any other housing topics that the committee needs updates on other than what was discussed today that can be tracked and administration can be aware of.

Mr. Johnson added that they are working to try to get some funding to Meals on Wheels. Mr. Gerdes added that it was an item that was brought up at the budget workshop that they have been following up on from Council Member (CM) Driscoll.

Mr. Greene asked for clarification of Committee Vice Chair Gabbards request.

Vice Chair Gabbard clarified her request. She shared statistics about the number of payment plans which included that on average the city sets up about 2,000 payment plans/month. In March the City only set up 1,400 and in April, only 400. Mr. Greene asked if the request would be a report to the committee or to council. Committee Vice Chair Gabbard asked that it be included in the update to Council at their May 21, 2020 Council Meeting.

Councilmember Driscoll added that in July it will be one year of the Mayor’s 10-year affordable housing plan. She asked for an update to the committee on the first year. Committee Chair Foster agreed to add the item. Committee Chair Foster asked if Mr. Gerdes or Deputy Mayor Tomalin had anything to add.

Mr. Gerdes stated that staff would be happy to update the committee and has been working on a statistics page. Mr. Gerdes is working internally with Mr. James Corbett to create the content page so that it will be available to all.

Committee Chair Foster asked if there was any other business in which there was none.
# Housing, Land Use, and Transportation Committee Referrals

**July 16, 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Return Date</th>
<th>Referral Date</th>
<th>Prior Dates</th>
<th>Referred By</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Consider an employer-assisted housing program for city staff</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>9/20/18</td>
<td>8/8/19</td>
<td>Gabbard</td>
<td>Gerdes</td>
<td>Staff was asked to consider an employee survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>St. Petersburg Affordable Housing Advisory Committee – Quarterly Report</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>2/06/2020</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gabbard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Source of Income Draft Ordinance</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
<td>4/19/18, 11/29/18, 12/13/18, 1/03/19, 3/14/19</td>
<td>Foster</td>
<td></td>
<td>In April 2018 CM Foster requested a HLUT discussion on source of income. The committee was receptive, so in March 2019 Foster filed an NBI asking legal to draft an ordinance. The ordinance went to council for first reading on September 5, 2019 and all Councilmembers voted in favor. At the public hearing on September 19, 2019, Council voted to send the item back to committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Gateway Master Plan and MOA</td>
<td>07/16/2020</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Abernethy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>State of Evictions in West Central Florida</td>
<td>07/16/2020</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Foster</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mayor’s 10-year Affordable Housing Plan Update</td>
<td>08/13/2020</td>
<td>05/14/2020</td>
<td></td>
<td>Driscoll</td>
<td>Gerdes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>HB 1339 Update</td>
<td>08/13/2020</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gerdes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 16, 2020</td>
<td>Brad Tennant &amp; Rob Gerdes&lt;br&gt;1. Tenant Relocation Policy&lt;br&gt;Brad Tennant &amp; Heather Judd&lt;br&gt;2. Tenant notification of rights during rental agreement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 13, 2020</td>
<td>Canceled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 12, 2020</td>
<td>Canceled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 9, 2020</td>
<td>Canceled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 14, 2020</td>
<td>Stephanie Lampe&lt;br&gt;1. Multi Family Affordable Housing Update&lt;br&gt;Joshua Johnson&lt;br&gt;2. Mortgage, Rental and Utility Assistance Update</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 11, 2020</td>
<td>Canceled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 16, 2020</td>
<td>Elizabeth Abernethy&lt;br&gt;1. Gateway Master Plan and MOA&lt;br&gt;Amy Foster&lt;br&gt;2. State of Evictions in West Central Florida</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 13, 2020</td>
<td>Robert Gerdes&lt;br&gt;1. Mayor’s 10-Year Affordable Housing Plan Update&lt;br&gt;Robert Gerdes&lt;br&gt;2. HB 1339 Update</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 10, 2020</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 8, 2020</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 12, 2020</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 10, 2020</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PINELLAS GATEWAY / MID-COUNTY AREA
MASTER PLAN
ST. PETERSBURG HLUT COMMITTEE PRESENTATION – JULY 16, 2020
Municipalities in the Gateway Area
General Plan Recommendations

- Improved Access and Mobility
  - Connected transportation networks for all modes recognizing adjacent land uses
  - Incorporation of mixed-use districts
  - Balance of multimodal safety and access
- Address Vulnerabilities
  - Heightened emphasis on sustainability and resiliency
- Job Retention and Job Growth
- Public Realm Improvements
Project Status

- Draft Gateway Master Plan complete, comments being incorporated
- Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) complete, comments being incorporated
- Hoping for local adoption of MOU by Fall 2020
- Adoption can come later if that is the desire of the local governments
- Moving toward implementation phase
  - Update of website
  - Development of performance measures
  - Development of reporting structure
Implementation Management Structure

- Draft MOU documents commitment between the Parties to implement the Gateway Master Plan
- Local governments are agreeing to support the Planning and Design Guiding Principles through implementation actions
MOU Key Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish the Gateway Partnership responsibilities and membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish Forward Pinellas as the conduit to engage partners and coordinate meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commit Parties to ensuring that the Gateway Master Plan is considered at all levels of local government structure, during amendment of relevant plans, prioritization of projects, and development of affordable housing strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commit Parties to working together to ensure no net loss of employment potential and using land more efficiently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commit Parties to practicing inclusive planning, to working with private sector to develop subareas, and to engaging the landowners of catalyst sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commit Forward Pinellas to developing a monitoring system for progress, convening meetings and maintaining the website; and the Gateway Partnership to establishing a reporting and collaboration structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Next Steps

- Finalize Gateway Master Plan and MOU
- Adoption of Plan and MOU by Local Governments
- Develop Performance Measures and Reporting Structure
THANK YOU!

gatewaymasterplan.org
Christina Mendoza, AICP
smendoza@forwardpinellas.org
Direct: 727-464-5693
Cell: 941-524-8373
The Looming Storm: The State of Evictions in West Central Florida
Without intervention, an estimated additional 5,907 households could lose their homes

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM
The impact of COVID-19 in our communities has been widespread, upending nearly every aspect of our daily lives. While the moratorium on evictions originally issued and then extended until July 1, 2020 by the state of Florida was a relief to many, it did not solve the core issue: the economic impact on families who were already struggling to make ends meet. These families are facing considerable hardships, and many are unable to afford their necessities, the greatest of which is rent. This disproportionately affects communities of color, where great disparities are still seen in both unemployment and homeownership rates.

As of mid-June 2020, a total of 866 households in the West Central Florida Region¹ are currently facing eviction. If nothing is done, these households could become homeless when the moratorium expires. Using historical eviction rates, in Hillsborough, Manatee and Pinellas Counties alone, at least another 5,907 are expected to receive writs of eviction once the moratorium is lifted.

Housing cost burdens were high even before the pandemic, with the median gross rent across West Central Florida at about $1,101. The average affordable rent for the typical leisure and hospitality worker was $602, and for a typical retail trade worker, it was $789. In each of the West Central Florida counties (except DeSoto), at least 1 in 4 work in the retail or hospitality industry. In DeSoto County, nearly 1 in 5 workers are in one of these industries.²

Legal services experts recognize that many landlords have not taken action against delinquent tenants during the moratorium, but they are likely to move quickly with evictions once they are allowed to do so. The most recent data show that 449,880 renter households were already housing cost-burdened across the region, meaning that they were already paying more than 30 percent of their income on rent. In addition, as 43% of individuals in this region are below the ALICE survival threshold³, these individuals are even less likely to be able to pay their rent.

This burden is most notable for families of color. Whereas national unemployment rates among white citizens went down from April to May 2020 from 14.2% to 12.4%, the rates slightly went up for Black citizens from 16.7% to 16.8%.⁴

Additionally, having a job does not always guarantee access to affordable housing. "There is a correlation between income and housing affordability. As income decreases, so does affordability. The affordability gap is a chasm that highlights the plight of historically manifested housing inequities.⁵ In the Tampa/St. Petersburg metro area, this has resulted in the housing cost burdens for families of color being disproportionately high at 60%. Black households that rent, in particular, face the highest housing burden at almost 63%.

Keeping renters in their current homes is the best way to prevent the furthering of an already-existent affordable housing crisis (for example, 111,000 affordable housing units are needed in the region).⁶ Often low-income households are kept from housing opportunities due to unfair policies and screening processes. Even when housing may be available, landlords or programs will not accept potential tenants for a variety of reasons including racial prejudices, criminal records, and citizenship status, which may be disguised as stricter policies that limit housing access. Without interventions of increased client support, increased financial support, and alignments of policies to remove barriers to needs, many members of our community will find themselves homeless.

SCOPE OF THE SOLUTION
In order to address this growing need, a series of solutions have been proposed to maximize the number of people who can be helped:

1. Organize pro-bono lawyers to help those at risk of evictions
The surge of evictions simply cannot be supported by the current supply of nonprofit lawyers in the area. Research shows

---

¹ For the sake of this white paper, “West Central Florida” refers to DeSoto, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pinellas, and Sarasota counties.
³ ALICE = Asset limited, income-constrained, employed. For more information, see: https://unitedwaysuncoast.org/what-we-do/alice-suncoast-2019/
that nearly 80% of tenants with lawyers leave court without an eviction record stemming from the case, compared with just 6% of unrepresented tenants. Having lawyers present to educate tenants on their rights, especially with new laws enacted due to COVID-19, will allow more individuals to stay in their homes. There also needs to be a clear focus on ensuring the availability of bilingual or Spanish-speaking lawyers that can support limited English-speaking families as well.

Therefore, we propose to support the recruitment, training, and administration of pro-bono lawyers to support client needs. While legal aid groups estimate a need of over 250 pro-bono lawyers to support a fraction of the cases available, any recruitment efforts can help provide needed legal supports to households in need.

2. **Provide advocacy to our community to help better navigate available CARES Act funds that are available**

While there are federal funds available to our communities through the CARES Act, each county and each municipality has discretion on adding their own criteria for administration. Therefore, to be eligible for these supports, each client must prove themselves to federal, county, and municipal requirements. These requirements have been created individually with good intentions, but the combination of each of these layers leads to difficulties in individuals in need receiving the funds intended for them. In addition, while requirements have been made to apply to all individuals, many groups have fallen through the cracks.

For example, according to local 2-1-1 centers, many gig economy workers have been unable to access these funds for housing. By being forced to provide specific documentation, many individuals eligible for funding are unable to receive assistance.

Meanwhile, the 2-1-1 call volume is only increasing. Between mid-March and the beginning of June, local 2-1-1s across the West Central Florida region have received over 11,700 rental assistance calls. In Hillsborough County, 40% of all rental assistance calls in the last 365 days have been received in the last three months. In Pinellas County, over 6,000 calls for rental assistance have been fielded between March and June 2020, which is a 103% increase from the same time period in 2019.

The Pinellas County Equity Profile by UNITE Pinellas provides specific long-term policy recommendations that can be transposed and adapted to other counties in the West Central Florida region and could prevent a crisis of this magnitude from occurring again.

3. **Provide a set of funds for legal aid groups to negotiate with landlords on behalf of clients**

While there are some federal funds available for our community, there are not enough, and varying county requirements have led to geographic inequities. Even if there were enough funds, there are too many individuals who fall through the cracks and are unable to receive these supports. While the amount of rent owed is considerable, steps can be taken to thoughtfully ensure funds can be spent in a way that can serve as many households as possible.

One solution is using lawyers from legal aid groups to negotiate rent amounts with landlords. This allows tenants to stay in their homes and allows landlords to recoup some of their funds owed. The average amount needed to negotiate per client is roughly 50 percent of the total amount owed. With average rents in the region’s counties at $1,101 and with upwards of four months of back rent owed, each client could cost roughly $2,202 to support. With $13,007,214, all clients currently facing eviction would be able to enter into negotiations to stay in their homes – not including any new eviction cases planning to occur in July. With $500,000, 227 clients would be able to enter into negotiations. While this does not solve the issue, it does begin to address the need.

4. **Engage in partnerships with local municipalities regarding eviction records**

Having an eviction record negatively impacts individual credit ratings and can stay on a credit report for 7-10 years. Since the eviction record is maintained as a public record, it could be available for up to 20 years. This may cause long-term harm to a person’s credit score and negatively impact their ability to rent and secure housing in the future. Through a review of local city/county public records retention policies, and discussion with local elected officials, it could be possible to work toward changes to these policies to negate some of these impacts related to COVID-19 related evictions.

This is only the beginning of this conversation. In addition to these needs for the July 1 deadline, additional discussions need to take place regarding support for the advocacy of tenants. With economists at the Federal Reserve predicting unemployment rates to be at 9.3 percent by the end of 2020, more than double the rate when 2020 began, more individuals are likely to be unable to afford housing, leading to further evictions. Through local philanthropic efforts supported by stronger city, county, and state policies embedded with racial equity, supports for families can be provided to ensure that they have safe housing in these difficult times.

---


8 This is a conservative estimate that does not consider court filing or attorney costs.