



## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AHAC)**

Sumter County, FL  
The Villages Sumter County Service Center  
7375 Powell Road Wildwood, FL 34785

**Meeting Minutes Date:** January 11, 2023.

**Members Present:** Chairman Andy Bilardello – Board of Sumter County Commissioner; Vice Chairman, Matthew Yoder – T & D Screen Enclosures, Inc; Secretary; Sandra Woodard – Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast; Robert Hanson – Sumter County Fire & EMS; Courtney Gage – VP Commercial Banker Citizens First Bank; Amber Tucker – Mid-Florida Homeless Coalition; PJ Lewis – Lewis Brothers Construction; Melanie Peavy – City of Wildwood Development Services Director; Asheley Raybon – Alternate (Real Estate); Liz Roberts – Romac Building Supplies; LuAnn Duncan–Sumter County Resident.

**Members Call-In:** N/A.

**Members Absent:** Danny Smith – Smith & Smith Realty; Gene Barton – Helping Hands Outreach.

**Public Attendees:** Denna Lafferty – Housing Coordinator; Frank Calascione – Economic Development Director; Tara Tradd – City of Wildwood; Geria Forrest – Habitat for Humanity; Daphne Simmons – The Salvation Army; Lisa Melendez – Sumter County School District Homeless Liaison; two staff members with the City of Wildwood.

**Location:** 7375 Powell Road, Suite 102, Wildwood, FL 34785. A copy of the public notice for this meeting is on file.

**Handouts to members:** All meeting materials are sent to the committee electronically before the meeting. Housing staff display the agenda along with agenda items on a projector screen during the meeting.

**Call to Order:** Mr. Bilardello called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**Flag Salute:** Mr. Bilardello led the flag salute.

**Public Forum:** N/A

**First order of business:** *Approval of AHAC minutes dated October 12, 2022.*

Mr. Hanson made a motion to approve the minutes, and Mr. Yoder seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Second order of business:** *Approval of AHAC minutes dated November 14, 2022.*

Mr. Hanson made a motion to approve the minutes, and Mr. Yoder seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Third order of business:** *Welcome new committee member, Sumter County Board of County Commissioners Andy Bilardello and introductions by members in attendance.* Mr. Bilardello, Sumter County Commissioner and new Chairman, introduced himself to the committee. Mr. Bilardello introduced the new members to the committee.

No action is required.

**Fourth order of business:** *Community Partner Forum- Guest Attendees.*

*Amber Tucker – AHAC Member & Housing Specialist for Mid-Florida Homeless Coalition.* Mrs. Tucker stated their agency covers Lake, Sumter, Citrus and Hernando counties. Mid-Florida Homeless Coalition is the lead agency that receives state and federal dollars to assist homeless individuals. Mrs. Tucker reviewed the agency's programs and discussed what services are available to citizens. Mrs. Tucker stated funds are available to provide housing and they provide case management during the term of assistance to help with teaching life skills. Mrs. Tucker discussed assessment hubs and the need for more agencies to provide this service. The agency has an outreach team who goes out into the community to provide supplies, support, transportation and referrals to other communal agencies that offer help with mental health difficulties. Mrs. Tucker stated there are many agencies that partner together to house a homeless family. Mrs. Tucker stated there are 850 homeless households in the four counties, 29 of those are citizens in Sumter County, which includes three veterans. Mrs. Tucker stated the agency has a hard time finding available housing that is affordable based on a family's household income.

*Daphne Simmons – The Salvation Army.* Ms. Simmons discussed the agency's programs to help get individuals off the streets and into housing. The agency works with families to set goals and they provide tools necessary for the family to achieve their goals and be successful. Ms. Simmons stated they encounter generational poverty requiring different educational classes for each family. Ms. Simmons stated the agency provides assistance for rent, utilities, propane, and prescriptions. There is an emergency food pantry and the office offers several food programs. The agency also provides services after a disaster occurs in a community. The outreach volunteer team goes out and feeds the homeless on Saturdays in Sumter County. Individuals can call the local office to find the feeding locations each week.

*Nishika Stafford – United Way.* Mrs. Stafford could not attend the meeting. Two staff members with United Way came before the meeting to drop off brochures and program materials for the committee.

*Lisa Melendez – Sumter County School District Homeless Liaison.* Mrs. Melendez is one of the district’s family in transition liaisons and their biggest focus is identifying students that are homeless and providing support to remove barriers allowing them to continue attending school. Mrs. Melendez stated it’s important for them to establish a relationship with the family so they feel safe to ask and accept help from the school. The program follows the McKinney-Vento Act which states children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence are homeless. Mr. Hanson stated many times essential service workers receive calls for a variety of reasons, sometimes correlated to homelessness. Mr. Hanson asked “When we recognize that help is needed, what is the most effective way for us to get them connected to your agency?” Mrs. Tucker stated her office has referral cards which have the contact information for many different agencies that she will provide to the committee to share with families in need of assistance. Mrs. Tucker stated a family can call either of the three agencies in attendance. Mrs. Tucker stated she can provide her direct cell phone number to essential service personnel to use in an emergency situation. Mrs. Melendez noted there is a lack of shelters in Sumter County which adds to the difficulty of providing transitional housing. Ms. Peavy note the number of students attending Wildwood Elementary increased by several hundred this school year. Mrs. Melendez further discussed the services provided by the school. Mrs. Roberts asked if they went to PTO or school meetings. Mrs. Melendez stated the school counselors serve as the liaisons at each school and they will contact her when they need specific services for a child. Mrs. Gage asked if there were items needed through donations. Mrs. Tucker provided a list of items needed. Mrs. Melendez discussed the snack pack program partnership with the Wildwood food pantry.

No action is required.

**Fourth order of business:** *2023/2024 Meeting Location, Dates, and Time.* Mr. Bilardello reviewed the proposed meeting location, dates and time: 7375 Powell Road, Wildwood, FL 34785 as the meeting location, time 10:00 a.m., and dates of April 12, 2023, July 12, 2023, October 11, 2023, and January 10, 2024.

All committee members agreed to the meeting location, dates, and time. There were no objections.

**Committee Members:** N/A.

**Next Meeting:**

- April 12, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. at 7375 Powell Road, Wildwood, Florida 34785 (published for public notice).

Mrs. Roberts made a motion to adjourn at 10:35 a.m., and Mrs. Woodard seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.