

San Juan County Housing Advisory Committee (HAC)
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 12, 2025
Hybrid Meeting
Meeting was conducted in-person at the Legislative Hearing Room
and via phone conference (Microsoft Teams)

MINUTES

In attendance: Anne Bertino; Mallory Hagel (Orcas), Melora Hiller, Angie Lausch (Lopez) and Steve Ulvi.

Staff: Ryan Page and Lori LeCount (both in-person at Legislative Hearing Room)

Council Liaison: Justin Paulsen

Guests: Lisa Byers, Paul Schissler, Patrick Baumann.

Absent: Nancy DeVaux, Farhad Ghatan, chair

- I. Meeting called to order at 10:36 am – by Anne Bertino

Approval of Minutes – January 8, 2025, as amended

Motion: Steve

Second: Mallory

Approved: Unanimous.

- II. Announcements/Public Comments:

No Public Comment. Steve proposed that the agenda be reviewed, post public comment, at each meeting.

- III. Review status of House Bill 1867– County Council has not taken a position yet. Paul Schissler, Community Development Planner in Whatcom County, noted that testimony will be taken tomorrow, a majority in favor. The current version House Bill 1867 disconnects housing and landbank REET, adds the possibility of cities enacting the tax and envisions sharing cost up to 50/50 between purchasers and sellers (currently purchasers bear 99% of cost). Our voter-approved REET is locked until 2030. The likelihood of increased competition for funding was discussed.

- IV. Housing Program Coordinator Updates: Ryan Page

PIT Count was January 30th at first look the numbers seem in line with past years.

Ryan attended two grant applications debriefs, for a CHIP grant proposal for Pea Patch and a Housing Trust Fund grant for the Argyle project. Feedback was positive, but there was not enough funding this time. Additional funding is anticipated for late 2025. CHIP funding had ARPA dollars (Federal dollars), going forward will be all State funding. Housing Trust Fund is all State dollars. OPAL may come to the County for supplemental funds. Ryan may propose that the County provide supplemental funds to OPAL and then apply to CHIP for reimbursement.

Ryan met with Town of Friday Harbor and Home Trust about the Argyle Project. The Town is in process of preparing a development plan.

V. Draft Housing Element and Land Capacity Analysis Discussion

- a. Ryan summarized the HAC feedback in a Memo to DCD. Process is moving forward.
- b. Community Land Trust Comments – no discussion.
- c. Report re: Density in UGAs and Affordable Housing Availability
Patrick Baumann, author of the UGA ChatGPT Report was present at the meeting. The question the report addressed was whether increasing density in the Eastsound UGA would automatically result in lower housing costs. The report indicated that increasing density alone would not, but expanding the UGA or building outside the UGA might lower housing costs.
- d. Ryan reviewed the status of tiny house report and suggested legislative changes. Council adopted language defining what a tiny house is. The bulk of the recommendations require DCD action. They may now be folded into the Comprehensive Plan process.
- e. Tiny house pilot project on Lopez – HAC can advocate for the project if they choose. Justin Paulsen invited the HAC to voice priorities in the Comprehensive Plan and any legislative changes. Tiny Houses/ADU were identified as the HAC's number one priority in the Comprehensive Plan.
- f. The Land Capacity analysis does not factor cost of development.

VI. Homeless Housing Task Force

The Homelessness Task Force had its first meeting in January. We had participation including two representatives from North Sound Behavior Health Organization; Dave Dunaway from Safe San Juans; representatives from two resource centers; representatives from two community land trusts; one person with lived experience; and Angie Lausch from the HAC. Richard Geffen and Ryan Erickson from the Town of Friday Harbor are expected to attend the February meeting. The plan is to have a draft of the plan for the HAC to review in the summer.

VII. Senior and Disabled Rental Subsidy Program 2025 Discussion

There is 90-100K in funding from the document recording fees. The rental subsidy program is funded by those fees. To qualify for the program the participants must have extremely low income (30% of AMI) and either be a senior or have a disability. Typically, there are 15-20 persons participating. Each year the participants requalify. Applications have been sent out and are due March 3, 2025.

VIII. Justin asked whether the HAC might discuss taking a position on HB 1345 at the next meeting.

IX. Next scheduled meeting: Wednesday March 12th, 2025.

X. Meeting Adjourned at 12:21 p.m.