

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

MINUTES

In attendance: Melora Hiller, Angie Lausch (Lopez) and Steve Ulvi. Nancy DeVaux, Farhad Ghatan, chair

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

Council Liaison: Justin Paulsen - absent

Guests: Lisa Byers

Absent: Anne Bertino; Mallory Hagel (Orcas)

I. Meeting called to order at 10:34 am – by Farhad Ghatan

No changes proposed to the Agenda, Steve requested an update on HB1867. Request from Melora to put cold weather shelters on a future agenda.

Approval of Minutes – Motion to approve minutes of the February 12, 2025 meeting.

Motion: Steve

Second: Melora

Approved: Unanimous.

II. Announcements/Public Comments:

No Public Comment.

III. Housing Program Coordinator Updates: Ryan Page

Legislative update:

- Status of House Bill 1867– The current version House Bill 1867 disconnects housing and landbank REET, and 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). Passed out of committee, no vote yet.
- Status of House Bill 1899 – The bill would eliminate the local volunteer PIT count. Passed out of the house.
- Status of House Bill 2114 – This is a rent stabilization bill, limiting rent increases and late fees. Passed out of the house.

Four projects in construction all going well.

Lopez Village North - houses are in place, utility work is underway. Occupancy expected in July. Melora indicated that modular housing is on time and on budget, not necessarily much cheaper. Angela indicated that the impact on the neighbors is much less than standard

construction with a shorter period of trucks and noise. Per State trust fund the average per unit cost is currently \$467,000.

Argyle project – ball is in the Town’s court for the development plan. The Town seems to be focusing attention on lighting, curbs and sidewalks and other potentially expensive elements. Concern was voiced about lack of leadership support for affordable housing. Ryan will forward talking points from the Home Trust for reaching out to the Town.

IV. Senior/Disabled Rental Subsidy Program Applications

Staff report – The program is continuing to expand. This year’s application includes ~\$109K for persons who meet the stated guidelines + ~10K for persons who slightly exceed the income threshold, funded by the ASH program. Staff recommends full funding for all the applicants.

Recommend the County Council approve full funding to all applicants to the 2025 Senior and Disabled Rental Subsidy Program.

Motion: Melora

Second: Nancy

Approved: Unanimous.

V. Emergency Rental Assistance Budget Discussion

Last year \$30K was budgeted for emergency rental assistance. It will be spent out in the next 2 months. \$45K budgeted for this year. Ryan asked for discussion/input on how the money should be allocated (population basis or divided equally between island) and whether more money from the ASH fund should be allocated for rental assistance. Support was indicated for additional subsidies. Ryan will approach the County Council for a budget amendment allocating the entire 80K ASH fund allocated for rental subsidies.

VI. 2025 Point in Time Count Data

There was a 10 person increase over 2024 in persons counted as ‘homeless’ per the Department of Commerce definition. There was discussion about what the numbers do or don’t reveal.

VII. Five-Year Homeless Plan Strategy Brainstorm Worksheet

The Task Force is in the idea gathering stage. The HAC was invited to add ideas. Question about whether vacation rental permit caps changing. There does not seem to be action to increase the number of the permits. Recently the County Council reviewed certain vacation rental permits re: compliance.

VIII. Closing Remarks

IX. Next scheduled meeting: Wednesday April 9th, 2025.

X. Meeting Adjourned at 12:09 p.m.