



**COLUMBIA AFFORDABLE HOUSING TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, MAY 10, 2022**

The Columbia Affordable Housing Task Force met on Tuesday, May 10, 2022 using Video Conferencing Technology. The Honorable Tina N. Herbert, Chair called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m.

<b>Attendee Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Arrived</b>
Tina N. Herbert	Chair	Present	
Jeff Armstrong	Family Promise	Absent	
Julie Ann Avin	MIRCI	Present	
Reggie Barner	The Barner Group	Present	
Yvonda Bean	Columbia Housing	Present	
Sue Berkowitz	Director of the SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center	Present	
Brenna Bernardin	Fast Forward	Present	
Pamela Bynoe-Reed	Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority	Present	11:15 AM
Dylan Gunnels	Director at Haven Homes	Present	11:04 AM
Tonya Isaac	Community Representative	Absent	
Jeff Larimore	Midlands Housing Trust Fund	Present	11:36 AM
Jennifer Moore	United Way	Present	
Brittani Richards	Habitat for Humanity	Absent	
Shayla Riley	Coldwell Banker	Present	
Lila Anna Sauls	President and CEO of Homeless No More	Present	
Gregory Sprouse	Central Midlands Council of Governments	Absent	
Allison Terracio	Richland County Council	Absent	
Regina Williams	Board Member	Absent	
Lester Young	Just Leadership	Absent	
Jim Zieche	More Justice	Present	
Chris Zimmer	Truist Bank	Present	

**INTRODUCTIONS**

There was a period of introductions of the task force members.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Approval of the October 12, 2021 and December 14, 2021 Affordable Housing Task Force Meeting Minutes



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Upon a motion made by Lila Anna Sauls and seconded by Dylan Gunnels, task force members voted [12 to 1] to approve the October 12, 2021 and December 14, 2021 Affordable Housing Task Force Meeting Minutes. Councilwoman Tina Herbert voted no. Jeff Larimore was not present at this time.

**COMMITTEE DISCUSSION**

2. Committee Reports

Councilwoman Tina Herbert said I want to make sure this group has some type of closure and/or new beginnings. There are a couple of recommendations out there but I felt we needed to honor the work that has been done. I want each of you to give me an idea of what decisions and/or issues you have addressed and what you want to do going forward.

Julie Ann Avin, Accessibility Committee Chair said we met in 2020 and determined the need to utilize universal accessibility standards for individuals that need senior living, people with disabilities, and people who have mobility challenges. We discussed accessible housing for individuals coming out of incarceration, which is more of a public policy issue. It has to do with background checks. We didn't get a lot of traction. We spent most meetings trying to define affordable and attainable housing.

Councilwoman Tina Herbert asked if the Accessibility Committee could do more after we add the recommendation of adopting universal accessibility standards.

Julie Ann Avin, Accessibility Committee Chair suggested that the city make a commitment to develop housing that meets universal accessibility standards. Each developer should know how to implement those standards.

Reggie Barner, Financing Committee Chair said there is an ever-moving target around financing for affordable housing. Currently, we are focusing on the state tax credit and the bond program under the 4% program. We need to address issues from a development standpoint. Columbia has one of the highest property taxes in the state and the committee needs to have dialogue around the tax abatement issue or incentive. The City's incentive for affordable housing development has not gone anywhere. We need to put some teeth behind that. There is statewide legislation that focuses on inclusionary housing where developers would be required to develop a percentage of affordable housing. There has also been discussion around a local housing trust fund. Those would be the initial focuses we could begin with this year.



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Councilwoman Tina Herbert said the city has a Tax Modernization Committee and it is important for us to have a liaison on that committee. Can I recommend that you be our representative on that committee? I need to see why there has not been any action on the 2007 recommendation on inclusionary housing. I will find out why there has not been any traction with the City's incentive. Back in the day, the city funded the Midlands Housing Trust. I want to make sure we are not creating another housing trust because it sounds like a lot more overhead.

Lila Anna Sauls, Legal & Zoning Committee Co-chair said inclusionary zoning works well in Charleston. It has not picked up traction here. This committee should not be looking at the city's zoning ordinances. It would be great if we could figure out inclusionary zoning and work to further that agenda in tandem with the Financing Committee. We are missing the for-profit developer on this task force. Venture capitalists are purchasing condemned properties in huge numbers. How do we access the list of properties that are condemned and slated for demolition? How do we save these properties and turn them into affordable housing for the neighborhoods? The Northside Community in Spartanburg worked because of community navigators. Neighbor Works provides training for community representatives. Community Navigators are key to solving this crisis.

Councilwoman Tina Herbert said that is on my radar and I share the list at every neighborhood meeting. I realize that people do not know how to do it and I do not have the capacity to help them.

Sue Berkowitz, Legal & Zoning Committee Co-chair said we need to consider how to restructure the issues in order to work through them. In terms of legal issues, we worry about people who are in jeopardy of losing housing. Eviction is a huge issue. We have the highest levels of evictions for medium size areas, especially in St. Andrews. I would like to see the right to counsel anytime someone is losing housing. We have seen how eviction court can work well. We wrote a grant for an attorney in the Richland County area. We are looking at the court rules and things that are happening to people when they are going through eviction. I would love for the taskforce to look at those issues. If we have an attorney doing this with our office, we will offer part of their time to be a part of putting that project together to help with mitigating the problems of eviction and eventually foreclosure.

Jennifer Moore, Partnership Committee Chair said we started meeting jointly with the Public Education & Awareness Committee. We talked about having a storyteller's bureau. We would be the folks to make the request once there is a clear plan. We would kick in when we need to deploy education or partnership efforts around specific recommendations by the group. United Way helped to create the Midlands Housing Trust Fund and we are sensitive to the idea of

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having two trust funds with overhead. We just want financing and resources to go into a housing trust fund in the most efficient way possible.

Brenna Bernardin, Public Education & Abatements Committee Chair said it would great to continue to merge with the Partnerships Committee. We have an outreach list. We are waiting for ideas and goals from the committee before we go out into the community.

Councilwoman Tina Herbert asked if we overlooked anything.

Dylan Gunnels said let's talk about large-scale investors and others who are purchasing at a rapid level, manipulating the market, pushing people out, and purchasing properties for cash. We are starting to see minor pieces of legislation that can help to combat that. Neighborhood and homeowner associations are coming together to keep this from happening. I do not want to neglect that part of the conversation when we are talking about affordability.

Councilwoman Tina Herbert said that is critical and if we can find a way to provide them with the tools, a plan, seminar and financing that would be very helpful.

Shayla Riley concurred with Dylan's comments. On the builder's side, there could be more communication with the builders association. Builders are selling lots to hedge funds before the house gets out of the ground. In one neighborhood, 25 lots were sold to an investor. I cannot tell you what that does to pricing and the quality of a neighborhood. It is borderline monopolizing. I cannot easily find a four-bedroom home under \$260,000. We have to change the builders' minds about what people need. We have a talent retention problem. People are leaving Columbia after graduation to go to other cities where they can afford the housing. It is important for the builders to hear about the kinds of models and floorplans people can have. More vertical development and townhomes are more appealing.

### 3. Monthly Meeting Schedule

Councilwoman Tina Herbert asked if 11:00 a.m. is a good time to meet each month. I would like to have an in-person meeting later.

There were no objections to meeting at 11:00 a.m. each month.



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4. Discussion of a Task Force Work Plan

Councilwoman Tina Herbert said I am going to take the information I heard today and send you a survey. I want you to help me prioritize the issues because my ultimate goal is for us to develop three things that we know we can accomplish or recommend for the City. We can divide that from advocacy issues. I will formulate the discussion so when we come back next time we will have those results. We can also see if we are all on the same page.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC  
City Clerk