



# DeSoto County

## Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

### Meeting Agenda

---

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

9:00 AM

Boardroom 201 E. Oak Street, Suite 103,  
Arcadia FL 34266

---

#### CALL TO ORDER

#### MINUTES APPROVAL

1. Minutes/ December 17, 2025

Attachments: [December 17 2025 Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)

#### REGULAR BUSINESS

2. Letter of Support/Affordable Housing Amendments

Attachments: [Letter of Support.pdf](#)

3. Meeting Schedule/ Upcoming dates

Attachments: [Suggested upcoming meeting dates.pdf](#)

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

#### COMMITTEE COMMENTS

#### STAFF COMMENTS

#### ADJOURN

NOTE: For quasi-judicial matters, any party desiring a verbatim record of the proceeding of this hearing for the purpose of an appeal is advised to make private arrangements for the production of a record and anyone wishing to present documents or other written evidence to the Board must provide eight (8) copies of the written material. If special accommodations are required in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals should contact the County Administrator's Office by calling 863-993-4800 at least forty-eight hours prior to the hearing.



# DeSoto County

5/19/2026

---

Item #: 1.

---

- Consent Agenda     Quasi-Judicial Public Hearing  
 Regular Business 9:00 am  
 Public Hearing Minutes

**DEPARTMENT:** Social Services  
**SUBMITTED BY:** Lauri Benson  
**PRESENTED BY:** Lauri Benson

**TITLE & DESCRIPTION:**  
**Minutes/ December 17, 2025**

**REQUESTED MOTION:**  
**To approve the December 17, 2025 minutes of the DeSoto County Affordable Housing Advisory Committee.**

**SUMMARY:**  
N/a

**BACKGROUND:**  
N/A

**FUNDS:**  
Budget Amount: N/A  
Actual Agenda Item: N/A  
Cost: N/A  
Account Number: N/A  
Explanation: N/A

# MINUTES

## Affordable Housing Advisory Committee Minutes

---

December 17, 2025 | Lauri Benson  
Meeting called to order at 9:00 AM by Oralia Ramirez

---

### In Attendance

---

Staff Members: Lauri Benson, Juana Sanchez,

Committee Members Present: Judy Schaefer, Donna Doubleday, Oralia Ramirez, Derek Taylor

Absent – Mike Provau, Melanie Brown, Thelma Guice, Jennifer Bowser

---

### Agenda Items

---

Item 1 – Welcome & Call to Order – Called to order by Oralia Ramirez at 9:00 AM

Item 2 – Roll call, Oralia Ramirez, Judy Schaefer, Donna Doubleday, Derek Taylor.

Item 3 – Lauri Benson presented the AHAC report for approval with corrections. The corrections were on Page 5 & 7. For page 5, “Agency” in the middle column & change the years in the last paragraph from 2024 to 2025. For page 7, fix the grammar on Incentive 5, second row, the semicolon after “assess.” Judy Shaefer made a motion to approve the AHAC report with corrections; the motion was seconded by Donna Doubleday. The motion was approved unanimously.

Item 4 – Lauri Benson began the discussion of Holly Layport’s application as a new Committee member. She informed the committee that Holly Layport could fall into any of the three following categories: Home Building Industry, Citizen at Large, or Non-Profit Provider of Affordable Housing. Due to her work with Habitat for Humanity, the committee found that she would best suit the Non-Profit Provider of Affordable Housing role. Donna Doubleday made a motion to approve Holly Layport as a new Committee member; the motion was seconded by Derek Taylor. The motion was approved unanimously.

Item 5 – Open discussion for the committee. – The committee discussed the Commissioners’ meeting from the night before. Lauri Benson discussed the Ordinance / Comprehensive Plan Text Amendment adding Family Homestead Exemption to the Future Land Use Element (County Initiated) Adoption. This was a brief discussion.

Item 6 – Open discussion for the public. – Oralia Ramirez asked Lauri Benson if there were any SHIP funds available for Purchase Assistance. Lauri stated that yes, there was a \$20,000 limit for moderate households and a \$25,000 limit for low-income households.

Item 7 – Adjournment – Judy Schaefer motioned to adjourn the meeting; Derek Taylor seconded the motion. The motion was approved by all to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 AM.



# DeSoto County

5/19/2026

---

Item #: 2.

---

- Consent Agenda     Quasi-Judicial Public Hearing  
 Regular Business 9:00 am  
 Public Hearing Letter

**DEPARTMENT:** Choose an item.  
**SUBMITTED BY:** Lauri Benson  
**PRESENTED BY:** Lauri Benson

**TITLE & DESCRIPTION:**

**Letter of Support/Affordable Housing Amendments**

**REQUESTED MOTION:**

**To approve the letter of support for affordable housing amendments.**

**SUMMARY:**

**The Board of County Commissioners will be reviewing and considering the Comprehensive Plan and LDR amendments that will support higher density for affordable housing.**

**BACKGROUND:**

**The Committee Chair has requested the Committee consider a letter of support for the amendments.**

**FUNDS:**

Budget Amount: N/A  
Actual Agenda Item: N/A  
Cost: N/A  
Account Number: N/A  
Explanation: N/A

# Letter of Support – Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

May 19, 2026

Board of County Commissioners  
DeSoto County  
201 E. Oak Street, Suite 201  
Arcadia, FL 34266

Re: Support for Increased Bonus Density for Workforce and Affordable Housing

Dear Chairman Hickox and Honorable Commissioners,

On behalf of the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC), we respectfully submit this letter in strong support of adopting enhanced bonus density allowances for developments that include workforce and affordable housing units.

As you know, the AHAC is charged under Section 420.9076, Florida Statutes, with reviewing local policies and recommending strategies that expand the availability of safe, attainable housing for residents across income levels. After careful review of current market conditions, development trends, and the County’s long-term housing needs, the Committee unanimously agrees that increased bonus density is one of the most effective and fiscally responsible tools available to the Board.

## Why Bonus Density Is Needed

- Housing demand far exceeds supply, particularly for households earning between 60% and 120% of Area Median Income.
- Construction and land costs continue to rise, making it increasingly difficult for developers to produce units at attainable price points without regulatory incentives.
- Local employers report workforce shortages, driven in part by the lack of nearby housing that workers can reasonably afford.
- Bonus density does not require direct County expenditure, yet it meaningfully improves project feasibility and encourages mixed-income development.

## Benefits to the County

Increasing allowable density for qualifying projects will:

- Expand the supply of workforce and affordable units in targeted growth areas.
- Support economic development by helping employers attract and retain staff.
- Promote smart growth by encouraging compact, efficient land use.
- Leverage private-sector investment to meet public housing goals.

## In Closing

The AHAC believes increased bonus density will significantly strengthen the County's ability to meet current and future housing needs. We appreciate the Board's continued commitment to supporting attainable housing opportunities for residents and stand ready to assist with implementation or further policy development.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Bowser Chair  
Affordable Housing Advisory Committee  
DeSoto County



# DeSoto County

5/19/2026

---

Item #: 3.

---

- Consent Agenda     Quasi-Judicial Public Hearing  
 Regular Business 9:00 am  
 Public Hearing Other

**DEPARTMENT:** Choose an item.  
**SUBMITTED BY:** Lauri Benson  
**PRESENTED BY:** Lauri Benson

**TITLE & DESCRIPTION:**  
Meeting Schedule/ Upcoming dates

**REQUESTED MOTION:**  
Discussion Item

**SUMMARY:**  
Discussion Item for future meeting dates.

**BACKGROUND:**  
The AHAC Committee must meet a minimum of once a quarter (4 times a year)

**FUNDS:**  
Budget Amount: N/A  
Actual Agenda Item: N/A  
Cost: N/A  
Account Number: N/A  
Explanation: N/A

## Suggested upcoming meeting dates

All meetings 9:00am in the Board Room

Tuesday, July 21, 2026

Tuesday, September 15, 2026

Monday, November 16, 2026 (Tentative)

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

Tuesday, March 16, 2027

Tuesday, May 18, 2027

Tuesday, July 20, 2027