



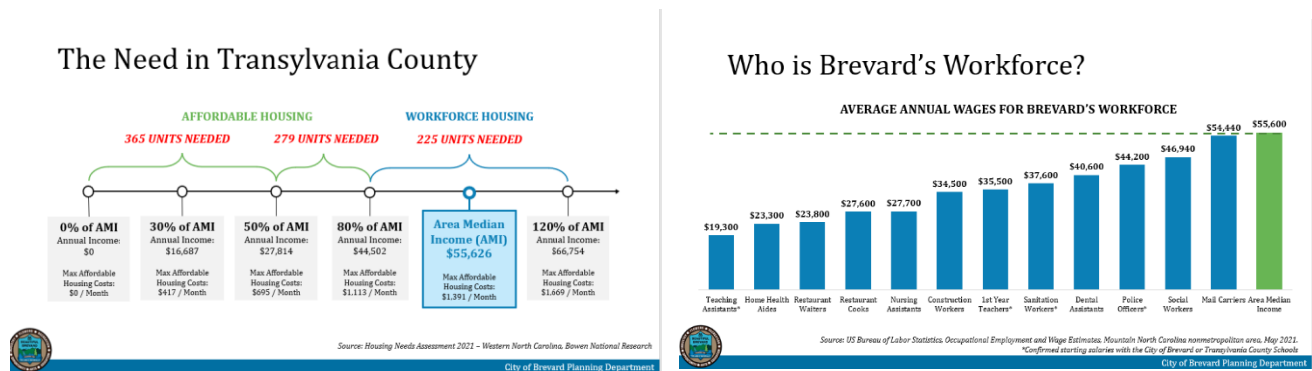
The Brevard City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, March 20, 2023. The mayor began by declaring April 2023 “Second Chance Month” and called on residents to honor the work of those who strive to help individuals with a criminal record become productive members of society.

During the public hearing session, Senior Planner Emily Brewer presented the proposed amendments to the City of Brevard Unified Development Ordinance, Chapter 13. In accordance with the UNC School of Government’s finding that tap waivers are not permissible under NC law, developers will be eligible for tap and sewer fee *reimbursements* if they commit to keeping a percentage of their housing units affordable.

Council also voted to approve the adoption of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) with the following modifications: the use of the “alternate” map of Downtown for Rice Street and the removal of the Blue Zones sidebar. (More information about the CLUP can be found on the [City’s website](#) and in the February 20, 2023 City Council meeting recap.)

City Manager Wilson Hooper previewed the proposed amendments to the Brevard Code of Ordinances (Chapter 42) concerning encampments on city property. A public hearing on the changes will be held at the council’s next regular meeting.

Ms. Brewer introduced the updated Housing Trust Fund Guidebook and Bylaws. Across all community engagement sessions held during the development of the CLUP, residents ranked “expanded housing opportunities and the preservation of the character of Brevard and its neighborhoods” as their most important goal. City Council similarly identified housing as a top priority during their strategic planning retreat held earlier this month.



Housing is considered affordable if it comprises 30% or less of a household’s income. The area median income (AMI) in Transylvania County is \$55,626, and many of the area’s key workers make less than the AMI. Transylvania County currently faces a shortage of over 600 units of affordable housing and over 250 units of workforce housing. In an effort to generate housing

solutions for the area’s workers and families, City Council established the Housing Trust Fund as a flexible source of funding. Ms. Brewer noted the ways in which cities are limited in what they can do under current NC laws. In response, the City is pursuing legislative changes while also capitalizing on the powers it is authorized to exercise (e.g., expending funds or conveying property to low-to-moderate income households—those earning 80% or less of the AMI). Ms. Brewer then reviewed some of the actions the City can take to address housing issues. The City can, for instance, use policies and tools to allow for the creation of more affordable housing, preserve existing affordable housing, partner with other entities to invest in housing projects or programs, and reevaluate the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to ensure that the regulatory environment can accommodate varied housing development. Recent housing accomplishments include

- joining with community partners and faith organizations like the Brevard Davidson River Presbyterian Church to identify potential sites for new affordable housing;
- signing a Development Finance Initiative (DFI) contract to assess the feasibility of affordable and workforce housing on three sites and pursue other initiatives;
- establishing the Short-Term Rental Task Force to assess the prevalence and impact of the short-term rental stock on the local housing market;
- enabling the Housing Committee to review the funding process and identify new housing initiatives;
- working with developers to bring affordable housing units to the area, including Fairhaven Meadows, which was granted HOME Funds and Low Income Housing Tax Credits to create 60 rental housing units for households earning between 40-70% AMI;
- codifying opportunities for “missing middle” housing and infill development to relieve some of the pressure on the available housing stock.

Other prospective and ongoing housing efforts include potential developer incentives in exchange for new affordable housing; collaboration with the Transylvania County Housing study; and continued advocacy for legislative change. Council then voted to approve the Housing Trust Fund Bylaws, which formally establishes the Housing Trust Fund, authorizes the usage of funds, and appoints the Housing Committee as the governing board. Later this spring, Council will be asked to consider further endowing the Trust Fund with money from the city budget.

HTF Improvements | Funding Usage



Summary & Key Takeaways

- Affordable housing has been identified as a **top priority** for the City time and time again.
- There is **no one-size-fits-all solution** in solving the affordable housing crisis in and around Brevard.
- An assortment of solutions will be required to reach **different income levels** and provide **different residential product types**.
- Changes to the Housing Trust Fund bylaws can **better equip** the City to **improve the lives** of Brevard’s residents and workers.
- The guidebook will help the program be **more approachable** for residents, developers, and service providers in need of assistance.
- Establishing clear procedures, criteria and priorities creates a **transparent process** for more **efficient and equitable** deployment of City funds.



Moving to committee and board appointments, Council approved the following appointments: Molly Jenkins to the Planning Board, Kevin Gallo to the Public Safety Committee, Victor Foster to the Housing Committee, Al Platt to the Transylvania Economic Alliance, Rodney Locks and Jennifer Kerr to the Brevard Housing Authority, and William Carson to the Public Works and Utilities Committee. Councilmembers encourage residents to continue to apply to serve on committees.

In their closing remarks, Councilmembers Aaron Baker and Geraldine Dinkins said they welcome public engagement with the Short-Term Rental Task Force and reminded everyone that the task force meets on the third Thursday of the month at 11:00 AM in Council Chambers. Mr. Baker also acknowledged the impact of the mill closure on the community in Canton and extended his thoughts to the town's residents. Finally, Mayor Copelof noted the upcoming Meet the Mayor event at the Mary C. Jenkins Center on March 28 at 10:00 AM.

Council has scheduled their annual budget workshop for the evenings of April 3 and 4, 2023. The City Council's next regular meeting will be held on April 17, 2023.