

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Housing Programs Division

Staunton Housing Commission Meeting – April 2, 2026 5:30 p.m.

	AGENDA
1.	Welcome and Introductions – Nehemias Velez, Chairperson
2.	Review of Housing Strategy’s Action Plan – Rebecca Joyce, Housing Planner and Grants Coordinator
3.	Introduction of the City’s Economic Mobility and Opportunity Program – Anna Leavitt, Economic Mobility and Opportunity Special Assistant
4.	CDBG and Housing Funding Discussion – Rebecca Joyce, Housing Planner and Grants Coordinator
5.	Housing Commission Representation: CDBG Annual Action Plan Meetings: 05.05.26 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. and 06.04.26 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. – Rebecca Joyce, Housing Planner and Grants Coordinator
6.	Central Shenandoah Regional Housing Study Recommendations – Nehemias Velez, Chairperson
7.	Commission Member Updates
8.	Next Steps – Nehemias Velez, Chairperson
9.	Adjournment
<u>2026 Commission Meeting Schedule:</u> March 5, 2026√ April 2, 2026√ July 2, 2026 October 1, 2026 Meetings are held on the first Thursday of the first month of the quarter at 5:30 p.m.	
<i>“If opportunity doesn’t knock, build a door” – Milton Berle</i>	

City of Staunton Housing Commission Roles and Responsibilities

The Commission shall have the following duties:

- **Partner** with the City's efforts to move the goals and strategies of the City of Staunton's Housing Strategy forward.
- **Provide** expertise and guidance to the City Council and City leaders on ways to increase the amount and quality of affordable and workforce housing in the City.
- **Participate** in an advisory role in creation of the City's Community Block Grant Program's Annual Action Plan that is submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development every August. Up to two members of the Housing Commission, who don't have a direct conflict of applying for or receiving CDBG funding, may participate in this advisory role.
- **Communicate** concerns of community members related to housing to the City Council and City leadership.
- **Conduct** periodic reviews of the City's Housing Strategy and recommendations based on current research and potential changes in the Staunton community.
- **Provide** an annual written report to City Council about the Commission's activities for the previous calendar year.
- **Perform** additional functions or duties as may be so identified by the City Council or City Manager or Designee.

MINUTES

City of Staunton Housing Commission
March 5, 2026
Caucus Room, City Hall

Housing Commission Members	
×	Philippe Bone , Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission
√	Lydia Campbell , Valley Homeless Connection, VCSB, Vice-chair
√	Jennie Hill , SAW Habitat for Humanity, Alternate
√	Isaac Izzillo , Augusta Health
√	Hans Kettering , Community Member Housing Advocate
√	Chris Lassiter , Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge
√	Robin Miller , Robin Miller & Associates
×	Lou Siegel , Valley Supportive Housing
√	Nehemias Velez , Staunton Housing Redevelopment Housing Authority, Chair
√	Susan Venable , Community Member Housing Advocate

City Council	
√	Brad Arrowood , Vice-Mayor, Housing Commission City Council Liaison
√	Jeff Overholtzer
√	Blake Shepherd

City Staff	
√	Rhodney Rhodes , Director, Community Development
√	Rebecca Joyce , Housing Planner and Grants Coordinator
×	Anna Leavitt , Economic Mobility and Opportunity Special Assistant

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m. with a welcome from Vice-mayor, Brad Arrowood, Council members, Jeff Overholtzer and Blake Shepherd, and Rodney Rhodes, Director of Community Development.

There was a brief period of introductions of each of the Housing Commissioners in attendance.

A discussion of basic housing concepts was initiated by Rebecca Joyce, the City's Housing Planner and Grants Coordinator. During this discussion, comments were made regarding what is considered homeless besides living outdoors, does it also include people staying with family, or "couch surfing"? The roles of government and nonprofit organizations in affordable housing was

mentioned. How the group can make it a reality that people in the City can afford to pay their rent or mortgage. The topics of workforce and missing middle housing were discussed as well. Who determines what workforce housing is, the employer or the employee? Many people make just enough money that they are not eligible for assistance but not enough to easily pay their rent. Are people making a living wage? Staunton needs for 1-bedroom and efficiency rental units was also emphasized.

Rebecca Joyce, Housing Planner and Grants Coordinator, reviewed the assumptions, goals, and strategies from the City's draft Housing Strategy document.

Next, Ms. Joyce reviewed the responsibilities of the Housing Commission in its advisory role to the City Council and to City staff.

An election of the Housing Commission's Chairperson and Vice-chairperson occurred. Nehemias Velez was nominated and elected Chairperson and Lydia Campbell was nominated and elected Vice-chairperson.

The final item of business provided highlights for the next meeting which occurs on April 2nd at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Section 9b: Action Plan

1. Strategy	CDBG Funds	
City Staff Involved	City Manager Director of Community Development Assistant Director of Finance Housing Planner and Grants Coordinator	
Advisory Boards and Partnering Organizations	City Housing Commission Organizations that receive CDBG subrecipient funding	
Funding Needed	HUD CDBG Entitlement Program annual allocation	
Potential Funding Sources	HUD	
Resources Needed	No new resources are needed. Program administered by city staff.	
Implementation Timetable 1 st quarter 04 – 06 2026 2 nd quarter 07 – 09.2026 3 rd quarter 10 – 12.2026 4 th quarter 01 – 03.2027	1st quarter: AAP drafted. Public hearings held. Projects on-going.	3rd quarter: New fiscal year begins. Subrecipient contracts signed. CAPER completed. Projects on-going.
	2nd quarter: Approval of AAP. Subrecipient contracts drafted. Projects on-going.	4th quarter: Monitoring visits of subrecipients. Projects on-going.
Benchmarks For Success	A majority of CDBG funds will be used to support rehabilitation of housing units and wraparound services that provide housing stability.	

2. Strategy	Housing Fund
City Staff Involved	City Council City Manager Director of Community Development Director of Finance Housing Planner and Grants Coordinator
Advisory Boards and Partnering Organizations	City Housing Commission
Funding Needed	Starting at \$30,000 and increasing in \$5,000 increments until it reaches \$50,000 between FY2026 – FY2030.

Potential Funding Sources	City's Capital Investment Program City's Annual Budget	
Resources Needed	Financial management of the Housing Fund. Project administration for projects developed from the funds.	
Implementation Timetable 1 st quarter 04 – 06 2026 2 nd quarter 07 – 09.2026 3 rd quarter 10 – 12.2026 4 th quarter 01 – 03.2027	1st quarter: Research successful Housing Trust Fund projects in other communities.	3rd quarter: Draft Policy review by appropriate City staff and the Housing Commission.
	2nd quarter: Draft a Housing Funds Policy that describes types of projects and distribution of funds.	4th quarter: Determine projects to be funded.
Benchmarks For Success	Up to three small sites, previously unoccupied, available for housing development through rehab or blight removal.	

3. Strategy	Community Land Trust/Deed-restricted Homeownership	
City Staff Involved	Director of Community Development Housing Planner and Grants Coordinator	
Advisory Boards and Partnering Organizations	City Housing Commission Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge (CFCBR) SAW Habitat for Humanity (SAW HFH) SAW Housing Staunton Redevelopment Housing Authority (SRHA)	
Funding Needed	TBD for implementation of strategy.	
Potential Funding Sources	TBD for implementation of strategy.	
Resources Needed	Time for research and drafting of strategy.	
Implementation Timetable 1 st quarter 04 – 06 2026 2 nd quarter 07 – 09.2026 3 rd quarter 10 – 12.2026 4 th quarter 01 – 03.2027	1st quarter: Research begins.	3rd quarter: Strategy reviewed by City Manager, Director of Community Development, and Executive Directors of CFCBR, SAW HHHF, and SRHA.
	2nd quarter: Strategy drafted.	4th quarter: Strategy reviewed by Housing Commission.

Benchmarks For Success	A Community Land Trust/Deed-restricted Homeownership strategy for the City is in place.
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4. Strategy	Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)	
City Staff Involved	Director of Community Development Community Development Department Staff Housing Planner and Grants Coordinator	
Advisory Boards and Partnering Organizations	City Housing Commission	
Funding Needed	TBD for implementation of strategy.	
Potential Funding Sources	TBD for implementation of strategy.	
Resources Needed	Time for research and drafting of strategy.	
Implementation Timetable 1 st quarter 04 – 06 2026 2 nd quarter 07 – 09.2026 3 rd quarter 10 – 12.2026 4 th quarter 01 – 03.2027	1st quarter: Research begins.	3rd quarter: Strategy reviewed by City Manager, Director of Community Development, and Community Development Staff.
	2nd quarter: Strategy drafted.	4th quarter: Strategy reviewed by Housing Commission.
Benchmarks For Success	An Accessory Dwelling Units Strategy for the City is in place.	

5. Strategy	Redevelopment Strategies	
City Staff Involved	Director of Community Development Community Development Department Staff Housing Planner and Grants Coordinator	
Advisory Boards and Partnering Organizations	City Housing Commission Renewing Homes of Greater Augusta (RHGA) SAW Habitat for Humanity (SAW HFH) Staunton Redevelopment Housing Authority (SRHA)	
Funding Needed	TBD for implementation of strategy.	
Potential Funding Sources	TBD for implementation of strategy.	
Resources Needed	Time for research and drafting of strategy.	
Implementation Timetable	1st quarter: Research begins.	3rd quarter:

1 st quarter 04 – 06 2026 2 nd quarter 07 – 09.2026 3 rd quarter 10 – 12.2026 4 th quarter 01 – 03.2027		Strategy reviewed by City Manager, Director of Community Development, and RHGA, SAW HFH, SRHA.
	2nd quarter: Strategy drafted.	4th quarter: Strategy reviewed by Housing Commission.
Benchmarks For Success	A strategy for redevelopment for the City is in place.	

6. Strategy	Landlord Education, Recruitment, and Retention	
City Staff Involved	Housing Planner and Grants Coordinator	
Advisory Boards and Partnering Organizations	City Housing Commission Staunton Redevelopment Housing Authority (SRHA) SAW Housing Valley Mission Valley Community Services Board Valley Supportive Housing	
Funding Needed	Minimal for meeting materials	
Potential Funding Sources	Community Development Department, SRHA	
Resources Needed	Curriculum and educational materials	
Implementation Timetable		3rd quarter: Develop curriculum and education materials. Reserve a location for meeting. Advertise and market meeting.
1 st quarter 04 – 06 2026 2 nd quarter 07 – 09.2026 3 rd quarter 10 – 12.2026 4 th quarter 01 – 03.2027	1st quarter: - - - 2nd quarter: - - -	4th quarter: Hold educational meeting.
Benchmarks For Success	At least one educational opportunity for landlords is held.	
7. Strategy	Land Bank	
City Staff Involved	Director of Community Development Community Development Department Staff Housing Planner and Grants Coordinator	
Advisory Boards and Partnering Organizations	City Housing Commission Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge (CFCBR) SAW Habitat for Humanity (SAW HFH) SAW Housing	

	Staunton Redevelopment Housing Authority (SRHA)	
Funding Needed	TBD for implementation of strategy.	
Potential Funding Sources	TBD for implementation of strategy.	
Resources Needed	Time for research and drafting of strategy.	
Implementation Timetable 1 st quarter 04 – 06 2026 2 nd quarter 07 – 09.2026 3 rd quarter 10 – 12.2026 4 th quarter 01 – 03.2027	1st quarter: Research begins.	3rd quarter: Strategy reviewed by City Manager, Director of Community Development, and RHGA, SAW HFH, SRHA.
	2nd quarter: Strategy drafted.	4th quarter: Strategy reviewed by Housing Commission.
Benchmarks For Success	A Land Bank Strategy for the City is in place.	

8. Strategy	Services for Unhoused Persons	
City Staff Involved	Housing Planner and Grants Coordinator	
Advisory Boards and Partnering Organizations	City Housing Commission Building Bridges for the Greater Good City's Faith-Based Community New Directions SAW Housing Staunton Redevelopment Housing Authority (SRHA) Valley Mission Valley Community Services Board Valley Homeless Connection Valley Supportive Housing WARM	
Funding Needed	No funding needed for this 18-month period.	
Potential Funding Sources	Will be looking for additional grant funding sources to support the City's unhoused community members.	
Resources Needed	City Housing Planner and Grant Coordinator's time for collaboration with organizations listed above and for grant funding research.	
Implementation Timetable 1 st quarter 04 – 06 2026	1st quarter: Compile current list of resources and organizations	3rd quarter: Conduct research and apply for available funds that will assist

2 nd quarter 07 – 09.2026 3 rd quarter 10 – 12.2026 4 th quarter 01 – 03.2027	that serve unhoused community members in the City.	organizations that serve unhoused community members in the City.
	2nd quarter: Survey organizations that serve unhoused community members in the City regarding their most pressing needs.	4th quarter: Conduct assessment of current state of needs of unhoused community members in the City and create an action plan of next steps.
Benchmarks For Success	Additional resources and services are available the City’s unhoused community members.	

9. Strategy	HUD-certified Housing Counseling Services	
City Staff Involved	Housing Planner and Grants Coordinator	
Advisory Boards and Partnering Organizations	City Housing Commission Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) SAW Habitat for Humanity (SAW HFH) SAW Housing Staunton Redevelopment Housing Authority (SRHA)	
Funding Needed	No funding needed for this 18-month period.	
Potential Funding Sources	Will be exploring federal funding and other sources once it is determined how. Where, and by whom counseling services might be provided.	
Resources Needed	City Housing Planner and Grant Coordinator’s time for collaboration with organizations listed above.	
Implementation Timetable 1 st quarter 04 – 06 2026 2 nd quarter 07 – 09.2026 3 rd quarter 10 – 12.2026 4 th quarter 01 – 03.2027	1st quarter: Meet with collaborating organizations to discuss what opportunities exist to provide housing counseling in the City, SAW and CSPDC regions.	3rd quarter: Implement housing counseling services if able.
	2nd quarter: With collaborating organizations, come up with an action plan for establishing counseling service implementation and costs involved with service provision.	4th quarter: Implement housing counseling services if able.

Benchmarks For Success	HUD-certified Counseling Services are more widely available to City of Staunton residents.
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10. Strategy	Legal Services For Renters	
City Staff Involved	Housing Planner and Grants Coordinator	
Advisory Boards and Partnering Organizations	City Housing Commission Blue Ridge Legal Services Community Action Partnership of SAW SAW Housing Staunton Redevelopment Housing Authority (SRHA) Valley Community Services Board Valley Homeless Connection	
Funding Needed	None	
Potential Funding Sources	NA	
Resources Needed	City Housing Planner and Grant Coordinator's time for collaboration with organizations listed above.	
Implementation Timetable 1 st quarter 04 – 06 2026 2 nd quarter 07 – 09.2026 3 rd quarter 10 – 12.2026 4 th quarter 01 – 03.2027	1st quarter: Work with collaborating organizations to educate renters in the City regarding the legal requirements and their rights regarding the eviction process. Advocate for free or low-cost legal services for those with low-to-moderate incomes.	3rd quarter: Work with collaborating organizations to educate renters in the City regarding the legal requirements and their rights regarding the eviction process. Advocate for free or low-cost legal services for those with low-to-moderate incomes.
	2nd quarter: Work with collaborating organizations to educate renters in the City regarding the legal requirements and their rights regarding the eviction process. Advocate for free or low-cost legal services for those with low-to-moderate incomes.	4th quarter: Work with collaborating organizations to educate renters in the City regarding the legal requirements and their rights regarding the eviction process. Advocate for free or low-cost legal services for those with low-to-moderate incomes.

Benchmarks For Success	More renters in the City will be aware of their rights as renters and better understand the legal requirements of eviction. A list of educational opportunities will be maintained for the 18-month period.
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11. Strategy	Community Housing Advocate Training	
City Staff Involved	Housing Planner and Grants Coordinator	
Advisory Boards and Partnering Organizations	City Housing Commission Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge (CFCBR) Staunton Redevelopment Housing Authority (SRHA) SAW Housing Valley Homeless Connection (VHC)	
Funding Needed	Minimal for meeting materials	
Potential Funding Sources	Community Development Department	
Resources Needed	Curriculum and educational materials	
Implementation Timetable 1 st quarter 04 – 06 2026 2 nd quarter 07 – 09.2026 3 rd quarter 10 – 12.2026 4 th quarter 01 – 03.2027	1st quarter: - - -	3rd quarter: Develop curriculum and education materials. Reserve a location for advocate meeting. Advertise and market meeting.
	2nd quarter: - - -	4th quarter: Hold advocate meeting.
Benchmarks For Success	Curriculum will be developed and first meeting of Housing Advocates held.	

PRIORITY SOLUTION 1

Leverage upcoming housing survey and strategy efforts to educate residents and strengthen comprehensive plan update



What It Does

Staunton is undertaking several housing-related initiatives, including a Community Needs Survey, Consolidated Plan update, and a potential Local Housing Strategy. This solution aims to use these efforts as a foundation to educate the public about housing needs and solutions, building support for a robust housing component in the upcoming comprehensive plan update.

How to Do It

- » Use Community Needs Survey results and Consolidated Plan priorities to inform housing discussions.
- » Apply for Virginia Housing grant to develop a Local Housing Strategy and Action Plan.
- » Create educational materials explaining housing challenges and potential solutions.
- » Host public engagement events aligned with the Local Housing Strategy process.
- » Incorporate insights and public feedback into the comprehensive plan update.

Who Does What

The Community Development Department will establish the timeline, integrate findings, coordinate with stakeholders, and oversee community engagement. The City Manager's Office will disseminate materials, support engagement efforts, and promote public meetings. The Planning Commission and City Council will guide the process, participate in engagements, and evaluate and adopt new policies.



How to Fund It

Use local operating funds, apply for grants from Virginia Housing, and seek funding from philanthropic and corporate partners interested in housing and community development.

How to Measure Success

- » Completion of Consolidated Plan, Local Housing Strategy, and updated comprehensive plan
- » # of participants in engagement activities
- » Improved public understanding of housing issues
- » Increased support for diverse housing options among residents and leaders

PRIORITY SOLUTION 2



Project quantifiable demand by incomes and housing types to determine what new funding sources are needed

What It Does

Staunton lacks consistent funding for affordable housing and supportive services, as existing state and federal programs are insufficient to meet the city's needs. This solution aims to quantify housing demand across income levels and housing types, using this data to explore and implement innovative local funding approaches that can consistently support a variety of housing projects and activities.

How to Do It

- » Analyze housing needs: Conduct a detailed housing demand analysis using existing data and projections to quantify gaps by income levels and housing types.
- » Set funding targets: Establish annual funding goals based on identified housing needs and potential economic benefits.
- » Explore funding options: Evaluate various funding sources such as bonds, special assessments, and tax-increment financing, focusing on politically feasible options.
- » Design allocation methods: Develop strategies for deploying funds, such as establishing a housing trust fund or creating a revolving loan program.
- » Implement and monitor: Select and implement at least one new funding source within two years and track its impact on addressing housing needs.

How to Fund It

Initial planning and analysis can be funded through the city's general fund or a Virginia Housing Community Impact Grant. Implementation costs will depend on the selected funding mechanism and can be determined during the evaluation process.

How to Measure Success

- » Completion of comprehensive housing demand analysis within 6 months
- » Implementation of at least one new funding source within 2 years
- » Amount of new funding generated for affordable housing initiatives
- » # of affordable housing units created or preserved as a result of new funding

Who Does What

The Community Development Department will lead the housing analysis, while the Finance Department evaluates funding sources. The City Manager's Office will oversee the process and engage stakeholders, with the City Council providing input and approving final recommendations.



SECONDARY SOLUTION 1

Create alignment between housing and economic development activities



What It Does

Integrating housing strategies with local economic development plans will help attract and retain talent moving to the area. By supporting and ensuring that diverse, affordable housing is built, the Staunton Economic Development Authority (EDA) can support economic stability and growth across the workforce spectrum.

How to Do It

- » The EDA can offer grants, incentives, revenue bonds, & real estate tax abatements to increase the financial viability of housing projects.
- » Working with the City and other agencies, the EDA can acquire, consolidate, and lease parcels of land for mixed-use development, using methods such as land banking, land swaps, discounted sales, and long-term ground leasing.
- » Serve as a resource for planning, executing, and managing projects, including applying for state planning grants and hosting knowledge-sharing events.

How to Fund It

Increased administrative costs could be funded by additional support for personnel in the City budget. Revenue from the sale or long-term lease of properties could cover operational costs. Planning grants are available from state agencies, such as the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and Virginia Housing.



How to Measure Success

- » # of housing units developed with EDA support
- » Amount of financial support provided to housing projects
- » Reduction in housing costs relative to wage growth

SECONDARY SOLUTION 2

Address vacant and blighted properties with evidence-based revitalization strategies



What It Does

Staunton has vacant and abandoned properties that contribute to blight and hinder community growth. This strategy aims to inventory these properties, explore ways to convert them to productive uses like housing, and leverage partnerships to coordinate revitalization efforts.

How to Do It

- » Conduct a detailed survey and inventory of vacant/underutilized properties in the city.
- » Explore options for addressing blighted homes based on state laws, including tax foreclosure and land banking.
- » Partner with the Staunton Redevelopment and Housing Authority to acquire and rehabilitate vacant properties.
- » Develop incentives and requirements for property owners to make improvements or repairs.
- » Engage nonprofit developers to coordinate targeted revitalization projects.

How to Fund It

The City can utilize Community Development Block Grant funds; state programs like Acquire, Renovate, Sell; and grants from Virginia Housing to support property acquisition, rehabilitation, and redevelopment efforts. Leveraging partnerships and incentives can help maximize available resources.



How to Measure Success

- » # of properties inventoried and assessed
- » Decrease in vacant/blighted properties over time
- » Increase in renovated/redeveloped properties
- » New affordable housing units created

