

Affordable Housing Commission

via zoom

Meeting minutes
8/11/25

Call Meeting to Order

Chair Casey Banks called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

Roll Call

Fe Bates conducted the roll call:

- Casey Banks (Chair): Present
- Megan Markel (Vice Chair): Present
- Randy Rickert: Present
- Judy Brown: Present
- Samantha Cooley: Absent
- Student Commissioner: VACANT
- City Council Representative-Jeri Turgesen: Absent

Staff Present: Leanne Wagener (Associate Planner, Community Development), Fe Bates (Administrative Assistant, Community Development)

ELECT CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR 2026

The Commission elected officers for the coming year. Chair Banks was nominated and unanimously re-elected as Chair. Commissioner Markel was nominated and unanimously re-elected as Vice Chair.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

No correspondence from City Council members was reported in response to a prior letter from the Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

July 22, 2025: Commissioner Markel requested a correction to the spelling of her last name in the roll call. The minutes were approved as amended.

Work Session Meeting, August 11, 2025: Chair Banks noted a pronoun error on the second page. The minutes were approved as amended.

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The Commission also noted for the record that no meeting was held in October 2025 due to lack of quorum.

COMPOSE A PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING SPARK PROJECT APPROVAL TO BE PRESENTED BY THE AFH COMMITTEE AT THE NEXT CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Chair Banks explained that the purpose of the work session was to draft a statement regarding the Spark Newberg project for the upcoming City Council meeting on August 18th. She noted that it was unclear whether the statement would come from the entire Housing Commission or just individual members. Chair Banks had prepared a draft statement for the commission to review and edit.

Chair Banks shared that that the draft was currently 6.5 minutes long, while public comment was limited to 5 minutes. It was suggested either editing it down or having two commissioners split the presentation over two comment periods.

The commission proceeded to review the draft statement paragraph by paragraph, discussing edits and changes to strengthen their arguments. The statement began with an introduction explaining that the Affordable Housing Commission had previously determined that Spark Newberg did not meet eligibility requirements for funding, and they were surprised when City Council awarded the funds anyway.

Key points in the statement included:

1. Public funds are limited and grants competitive, requiring clear transparent standards. The commission felt the City Council ignored the scoring rubric they had previously approved for the commission to use.
2. Spark Newberg was legally neither a non-profit nor for-profit organization at the time of application. The commission acknowledged that City Council made their award conditional on proving 501(c)(3) status but argued a fair process would require applicants to have their legal status sorted prior to applying.
3. Because Spark Newberg did not have established legal 501(c)(3) status, the commission was unable to review their dissolution clause. The CET fund requires funded projects to provide affordable housing for at least 60 years, and it was unclear what would happen to Spark Newberg's assets if the organization dissolved or the program failed to launch.
4. Eligible applicants are required to demonstrate financial feasibility. The commission had not seen evidence that Spark had secured the additional \$6 million needed to launch the program. The commissioners referenced a previous project (Peace Trail Village) that was required to prove it had secured additional funding before receiving city funds.
5. Spark Newberg intends to use the grant to purchase property but had not identified a property at the time of application. The commission argued this cast doubt on the project's viability and readiness to launch.
6. While the written application referred to rent, the verbal presentation used terms like "participant fees," which could negate the tenant-landlord relationship and affect participants' legal rights.

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7. The commission expressed concern about the extensive list of program requirements (classes, meetings, unpaid internships, community service, home inspections) and wondered if participants working full-time jobs with families could realistically complete all requirements over four years.

Throughout the discussion, commissioners expressed that they felt the City Council ignored the commission's recommendation and the established scoring rubric. They emphasized the importance of process, transparency, and fairness.

The commissioners discussed whether to speak as individuals or as a commission. They ultimately decided to present the statement as coming from the four commissioners present at the work session rather than the entire commission.

After editing the statement to meet the time requirements, the commissioners discussed the logistics of presenting at the upcoming City Council meeting. Chair Banks would deliver the oral statement and also provide printed copies to council members at the meeting. Commissioner Cooley would participate remotely from Texas, and Commissioner Markel also planned to sign up to speak.

MOTION: Commissioner Cooley moved to adopt the statement to be read before City Council on behalf of the four commissioners present. Commissioner Markel seconded.

The commission conducted a verbal vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Chair Banks thanked the commissioners for their input and stated that his hope was not just to be contrarians but to improve the political process and achieve better results in the end.

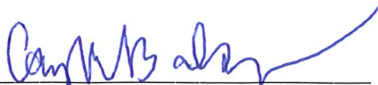
Next Meeting – October 28, 2025

The next meeting was confirmed for October 28, 2025, at 4:00 PM via Zoom and invited Councilor Turgesen to attend.

Adjournment

Chair Casey Banks adjourned the meeting at 4:46 PM.

Approved by the Newberg Affordable Housing Commission this 28th day of October 2025.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Casey Banks".

Affordable Housing Commission Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Fé Bates".

Fé Bates

Fé Bates, Commission Secretary