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Affordable Housing, Part IV

A very real problem in addressing affordable housing is that those trying to help do not understand the needs we are trying to meet. I have read articles discussing the need ranging from 4-bedroom homes with a 2-car garage, to multiple 1-bedroom apartment units with separate baths and a common kitchen. Action that has been taken to build affordable housing shows that legislators and local politicians do not know what constitutes affordable housing.

Having managed a senior retirement community, I can tell you that housing needs of seniors are quite different from those of young families. So the first step is to define the age group you are assisting. For those over age 65, you could design a multi floor complex of 1- and 2-bedroom housing units with a great room, small kitchen, and common dining facility.

Not only do we need to define the type of housing, we need to know how we will pay for it. I have mentioned the Sadowski Fund, which was legislated into law to help provide funds for affordable housing. Since its inception, over \$3.2 BILLION has been raided from the fund by legislative action to pay for General Revenue projects – a violation of the purpose for which the fund was established.

Consider what those funds could have accomplished had they been combined with private investor money to build the rental type housing now needed. We can not encourage elders and others to come to Florida if we can not provide affordable housing. Toss into the equation a need to accommodate the homeless, which often include families with no place to live.

At the conclusion of the 2021 legislative session, Florida legislators agreed to stop



HELPING SENIORS OF BREVARD
JOE STECKLER

their raiding and let approximately \$338 million remain in the Sadowski Fund. I have a copy of the Council of Catholic Bishops of Florida report that supports such action. Then, in the last week of the current legislative session, a group of legislators stole \$100 million from the Sadowski Fund to support a Hometown Heroes program (SB788) that does not exist, having died in Committee. Where is this money now? Did you see any reports on such legislation? You will if you go to <https://share.newsbreak.com/tf2prlyx> and read about what I have stated here.

There are several schools of thought on how to build affordable housing. My preference is for appointed local boards, chaired by a non politician who has the requisite knowledge, background, managerial skills, and desire to making affordable housing a reality. This is not a political arena for building one's resume. It is a time for action and building a plan that can attract investors or, if managed correctly, be accomplished by local government.

We have wasted 20 years of time and valuable funding for affordable housing. It is time to form local groups, empowered with adequate authority to develop and fund plans that will meet local housing needs. Someone has to be in charge who can accomplish this mission before we see another 20 years pass us by.

Contact Helping Seniors at 321-473-7770, at www.HelpingSeniorsOfBrevard.org, or at P.O. Box 372936, Satellite Beach, FL 32937.



Alex Schierholtz/Staff photographer

Allan Hernandez, of Palm Bay Round 13, faces off with Guillermo Zuniga, of Miranda Boxing Team, during the 'Champions in the Making - The Legend Continues' on June 5, 2021 at the Palm Bay Community Center.

Boxing

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Some fighters from Round 13, which Mr. Hernandez said serves those from as far away as DeLand, Vero Beach and Fort Pierce, will be participating in the event, which is undoubtedly another step in what is a gradual process that sees them grow, Mr. Hernandez added.

"We do everything gradually. We start from ground zero, where you learn how to walk, how to move.....how to not get hit, how to move the head, how to throw, how to

counter," Mr. Hernandez said. "It's a beautiful art because you see them develop from ground zero all the way to actually competing. Some win, some lose but even when they lose they know accomplish so much."

Tickets are currently on sale for the event with ringside tickets costing \$25 and general admission costing \$15. Mr. Hernandez noted that the seating capacity of the center can allow for up to 1,000 fans to attend.

Those interested in purchasing tickets can do so through eventbrite.com or by calling 321-403-2595. Tickets can also be bought at the Center starting in the first week of May, Mr. Hernandez added.