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February 22, 2022

Marissa Button
Director of Multifamily Allocations
Florida Housing Finance Corporation
227 N. Bronough St., Suite 5000
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Re: RFA 2022-201 Preference Increase

Dear Marissa,

During the December 9, 2021, Florida Housing Finance Corporation (“FHFC”) 2022/2023 RFA Funding Cycle Workshop, the Local Government Area of Opportunity preference for Small/Medium Counties under RFA 2022-201, for qualified applications for developments that were previously submitted in RFA 2020-201 and RFA 2021-201 but were not awarded preference, is currently anticipated to be one selected application. Two additional qualified applications will be selected for the LGAO goal, regardless of whether an application was previously submitted.

We urge FHFC to consider increasing the preference for qualified applications for developments that were previously submitted in RFA 2020-201 and RFA 2021-201 but were not awarded preference, to two selected applications, and reduce the preference for developments regardless of whether applications were previously submitted, to one selected application. We strongly believe that developments that have previously submitted qualified LGAO applications should have an increased opportunity to be awarded preference than developments that have not previously submitted a qualified LGAO application.

Since 2017, Smith & Henzy Advisory Group and the Lake Wales Housing Authority have been working together to expand affordable housing options for the City of Lake Wales residents through the redevelopment of the existing Grove Manor Apartments public housing complex. Since this time, we have actively pursued financing (SAIL, CDBG, 9% LIHTC) through FHFC to make this vision a reality, but we have not been fortunate in our lottery ball draws.

In early 2019, the City of Lake Wales engaged urban planner Dover, Kohl & Partners to formulate a plan to revitalize the city. In October 2019, the city adopted the Lake Wales Connected Plan to revitalize the city and connect the historic downtown to the northeast neighborhoods. Grove Manor Apartments is the dividing line between the northeast neighborhoods and the downtown area. For additional information on the Lake Wales Connected Plan, please refer to www.cityoflakewales.com/919/Lake-Wales-Connected-Plan. The City of Lake Wales is committed to the redevelopment of Grove Manor Apartments. This commitment is evident by its financial contribution of \$1,000,000.

As Smith & Henzy and the LWHA were preparing for the 2021 RFA Cycle, we were invited by the Community Redevelopment Agency (“CRA”) to work with Dover, Kohl & Partners to prepare a redevelopment plan for Grove Manor that fit the objectives of the Lake Wales Connected Plan. This collaboration culminated in a 4-Phase site

plan (see attached Exhibit A) that will provide connectivity for residents to the downtown area and eliminates the barrier that the current development projects.

We do not make this request lightly and understand that all applications submitted for funding have a story and are important to the local community. However, we believe that the redevelopment of Grove Manor Apartments is crucial to the overall implementation and success of the Lake Wales Connected Plan. The City of Lake Wales CRA strongly believes this as well, as evidenced by the Letter of Support included as Exhibit B.

Sincerely,



Darren Smith, Principal
Smith & Henzy Advisory Group

Exhibit A



**City of
Lake Wales**

201 W. Central Avenue W.
P.O. Box 1320
Lake Wales, FL 33859-1320
Phone (863) 678-4182
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February 17, 2022

Marissa Button
Director of Multifamily Allocations
Florida Housing Finance Corporation
227 N. Bronough St., Suite 5000
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Re: CRA Support of RFA 2022-201 Preference Increase

On behalf of the Lake Wales Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), I am writing to express our members support of the request from Smith & Henzy Advisory Group to increase the Local Government Area of Opportunity preference for Small/Medium Counties under RFA 2022-201 that qualify for developments that previously submitted in RFA 2020-201 and RFA 2021-201, but not awarded preference to three selected applications. Currently, based on the December 9, 2021, Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) 2022/2023 RFA Funding Cycle Workshop, that preference is one selected application.

In 2019, the City of Lake Wales adopted the Lake Wales Connected Plan to revitalize the core of the city, which includes the historic downtown district and the Northwest Neighborhood. The redevelopment of the existing Grove Manor Apartments public housing complex is a key component to the success of the overall plan; it serves as the gateway between both areas.

The redevelopment of Grove Manor will transform the existing housing complex into a modern neighborhood community with public housing plus moderate income and market rate units. The enhancements will give residents a hospitable environment and connect them to areas establishments and recreation opportunities.

The CRA, Smith & Henzy, and urban planner Dover, Kohl & Partners have worked closely to formulate a redevelopment plan for Grove Manor Apartments that will meet the goals of the Lake Wales Connected Plan and enhance the lives of its residents.

Over the past two years, Smith & Henzy have submitted applications under RFA 2020-201 and RFA 2021-201 for Grove Manor Apartments. Attempts to draw a low lottery number to ensure a funding award of 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) have not been successful. Increasing the preference for submitted applications in 2020 and 2021 RFA cycles, not awarded funding preference, may increase the opportunity for an award, initiating the redevelopment of Grove Manor as outlined in the Lake Wales Connected Plan.

In closing, we would like to thank the Florida Housing Finance Corporation for providing the funding, and the opportunity to enhance the lives and living conditions of the citizens of Florida.

Sincerely,

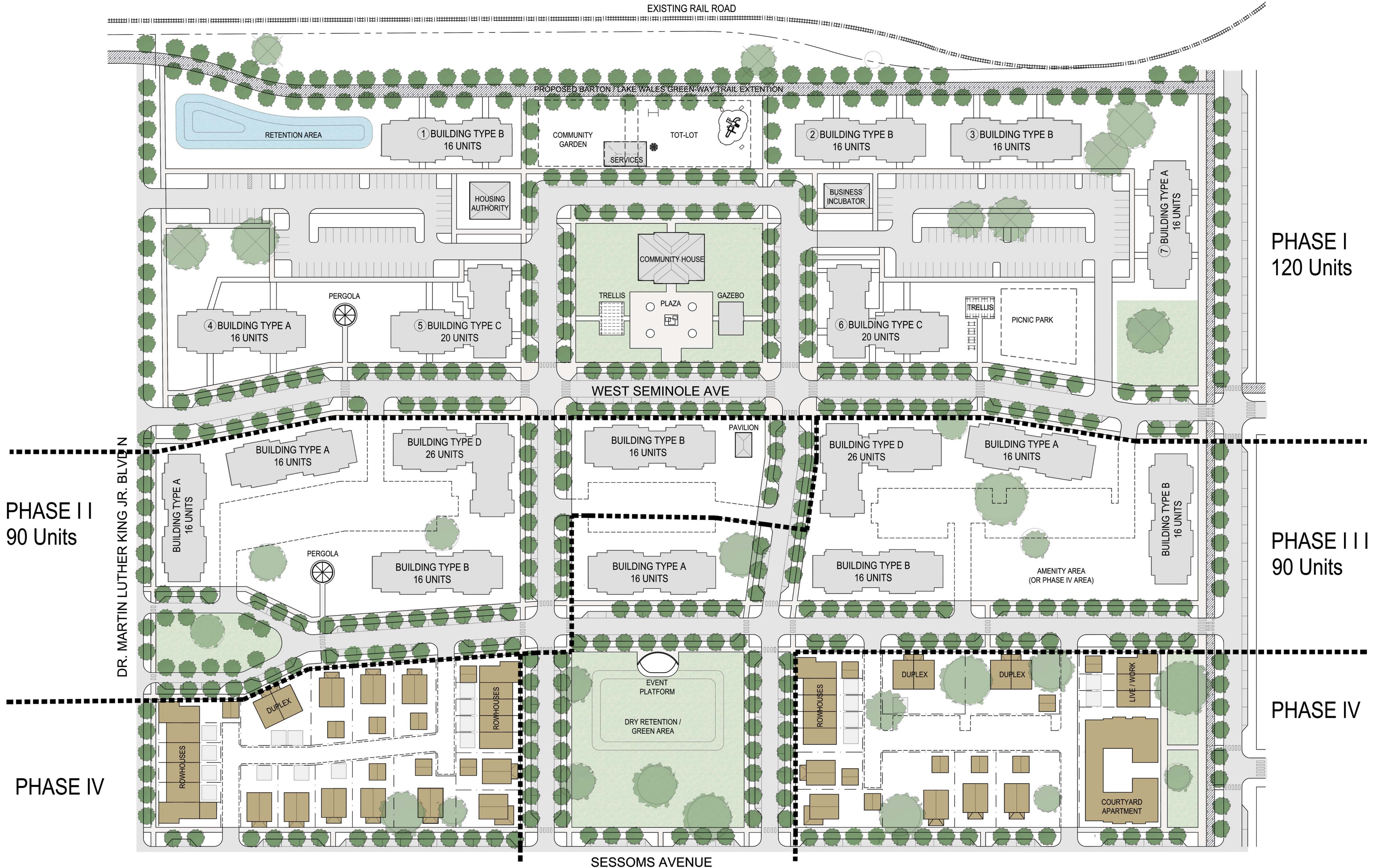
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'James Slaton', is written over a blue circular stamp or seal.

James Slaton | City Manager | City of Lake Wales
201 W. Central Avenue | Lake Wales, FL 33853 | P.O. Box 1320 Lake Wales, FL 33859
Phone: 863.678.4182 x 225 | Fax: 863.678.4180 | E-Mail: jslaton@lakewalesfl.gov

GROVE MANOR SITE PLAN

DK&P Recommendations 07.06.21

DOVER, KOHL & PARTNERS
town planning



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