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**Affordable Housing Committee**

Town of Hinesburg

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**Meeting Minutes – March 22, 2023**

**In-person and Zoom Meeting – 7:00 PM**

**(Town Hall First Floor Town Clerk’s Office)**

**Committee Members Present:** Carl Bohlen, Dave Nagel, Xander Patterson, Beth Whitlock, Andy Miller, Rocky Martin, Emily Raymond, and Dale Wernhoff.

**Also Present:** Mike Loner (Hinesburg Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee) and Amy Demetrowitz (COO, Champlain Housing Trust)

**Public Present:** Amanda Vincent

The meeting came to order at approximately 7:05 PM.

*Housing Project Updates:*

* Hinesburg Center Phase 2: Final approval was granted by the Development Review Board (DRB) on 2/21/23.
* Haystack Crossing: There is no update at the time of our meeting on the Act 250 process or the construction timeline for this project.
* Kelley’s Field 2: The project is all permitted except for their state building permit. They are waiting on two funding approvals. They are hoping to close in late April and start construction by May 1st.
* NRG: See the conversation below with Amy Demetrowitz.

*Discuss Meeting Format:* In January the state legislature approved a two-year extension of Covid 19 legislation that allows town committee meetings to be entirely online. Our last two meetings have been hybrid, with both an in-person (at the town hall) option and a remote (Zoom) option. We need to decide if we want to continue the hybrid option or go to online-only meetings. (Note: We will continue this at our next meeting as not all committee members attended this portion of tonight’s meeting.)

*Discuss Fair Housing Proclamation:* Carl incorporated the feedback from our last meeting into a second version of the Fair Housing Proclamation. He also integrated comments from the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO) and the Hinesburg Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee (HDEIBC). Mike Loner, a member of the HDEIBC, then shared his committee’s evaluation of the proclamation. It was agreed by all parties that the barriers to fair housing would be grouped together for this year’s proclamation, but these could be separated in future proclamations. Carl indicated he also changed some of the wording to make the proclamation sound less formal. Carl said if there were no comments then he will send it to the Select Board. Dave moved it to be sent in and Dale seconded the motion. It was approved by voice vote.

Mike said he appreciated our committee’s work and that he would like our two town committees to team up in the future on appropriate topics. Carl asked Mike if he’d like to give our group a presentation about his group but Mike said they are in the very early stages of their work and are in the process of figuring their status out.

*Habitability Discussion:* Beth investigated rental housing habitability issues within the town. According to CVOEO, between 1/1/19 and 2/17/23 the Vermont Tenants Hotline received 31 calls from Hinesburg renters. 11 calls were regarding habitability issues while the other 20 were for other problems. There were also 54 calls from Hinesburg mobile home residents, with some of these multiple calls from the same household. They do track the issues but won’t share that information. They only log calls that are longer than 15 minutes and only half the calls logged include town info, so that would indicate there may be additional issues that are not tracked. We decided to see if there is a way to find out what these issues are and get a total of how many rental units there are in town.

Rocky checked with the town’s Health Officer regarding habitability issues, but that person was just appointed on 3/1/23 and is still getting up to speed with the office. Rocky did say he was the town’s Health Officer for 15 years. Tenants and/or landlords can contact the Health Officer about any issues. The officer can issue a health order through the Select Board to force a landlord to fix any issues. In his 15 years in the post, Rocky only had to issue two health orders. Usually, any problems are taken care of before they get to that point.

*Affordable Housing Discussion:* Amy Demetrowitz, Chief Operating Officer for Champlain Housing Trust (CHT), gave an informative presentation on what CHT is and does. She also provided information on their project on land adjacent to NRG Systems, tentatively called Windy Ridge. It will have a large affordable housing component thanks to the land being donated by the former owner of NRG. It’s currently a work in progress; more information will be forthcoming later. Amy also responded to several general questions committee members had regarding the resale of affordable units, rental versus owned units, construction costs, and the lack of available units. In closing, Amy said the best ways we could advocate for the Windy Ridge project is to:

* Get an extension of the Neighborhood Development Area designation to include their project area, which could then avoid Act 250 review;
* Get a waiver of impact fees; and
* Extend the town water and sewer to the development.

*Perpetual Affordability Discussion:* We discussed the difference between perpetually affordable housing (affordable in perpetuity, for 99 years, for the life of the building) versus long-term affordable housing (for 30 years, but can be set up to reset the clock after every transaction) versus affordable housing (affordable for some other term, such as 10 or 20 years). Our committee will advocate for any type of affordable housing but is our funding advocacy for perpetually affordable housing only or any term of affordable housing? We will return to this topic at a future meeting.

*ADU Forum Follow-Up:* Rocky sent out a group email to the 19 people that provided their email addresses at our 10/20/22 ADU forum. He told them about the state program (discussed at our 12/20/22 meeting) to promote ADUs. He received one reply stating that the person is going to apply for the program. We need to see if we can support their application in any way.

*Consider Next Guests to Discuss Affordable Housing:* At our next meeting, we’ll speak with Cindy Reid from Cathedral Square. Cindy was going to attend tonight’s meeting but had a schedule conflict. We’re also going to see if someone from CVOEO would like to attend our next meeting. Xander suggested that somewhere down the road we speak to somebody who is on top of alternative housing methods, like container homes.

*Meeting Recording:* Dale is looking into ways to voice record the meetings and then transcribe the recordings to both have an accurate reference of the topics and to streamline the minutes. There were no objections among the committee members, with the understanding that the minutes would continue to be the headlines from our meetings and not a word-for-word novel. Dale will get the information about this process to Carl, who will verify with the town that it’s okay to do this.

*Approve Minutes from February 22nd:* We reviewed the 2/22/23 minutes. Xander motioned they are to be approved and Rocky seconded. They were approved by voice vote.

*Motion to Adjourn:* Rocky made the motion to adjourn and Xander seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:50 PM.

**Next Meeting –**

April 26th – Time and topics to be determined; see agenda on the town website.

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Wernhoff

HAHC Secretary



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