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**Affordable Housing Committee**

Town of Hinesburg

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**Meeting Minutes – June 28, 2023**

**In-person and Zoom Meeting – 6:00 PM**

**(Town Hall Third Floor Conference Room)**

**Committee Members Present:** Carl Bohlen, Dave Nagel, Xander Patterson, Beth Whitlock, Rocky Martin, and Dale Wernhoff

**Also Present:** Alex Weinhagen (Director of Planning and Zoning, Town of Hinesburg) and Ric Cengeri (Communications Specialist, HomeShare Vermont)

**Public Present:** Roberta MacDonald

The meeting came to order at approximately 6:05 PM.

*Hinesburg Bylaws Modernization:* Alex Weinhagen, Director of Planning and Zoning for the Town of Hinesburg, joined us to discuss the Planning Commission’s (PCs) Bylaw Modernization for Housing project. The PC is hoping by updating and/or tweaking our zoning regulations it will allow for additional housing in town. Some of the revisions being discussed include:

* Having the affordable housing unit (AHU) quantity be a straight percentage of the total number of planned units, not calculated on the base density before any bonus densities are applied (this is a change our committee has been advocating for since 2022 at least); the consultant is also suggesting we get rid of the density bonuses and instead have those incorporated into the base/standard density (Alex said some of the density bonuses we have in our zoning regs have never been used and some have only been used in one project).
* Increase the percentage of AHUs in any development from 10% to 15%.
* Distribute the percentage of AHUs between ownership and rental similar to the market rate units.
* Incorporate an income eligibility test for resale of ownership units.
* Revise the town’s definition of affordability (80% of area median income) to align with the state’s definition (120% of AMI); this change expands who can leverage an AHU to include not just those with low income but also the “missing middle” class who haven’t benefited from these programs.

Alex said both he and the consultant would like our committee’s comments on these proposed revisions before they go to the Select Board.

*Affordable Housing Discussion:* Ric Cengeri, Communications Specialist for HomeShare Vermont, provided information on what his organization does. In business since 1982, HomeShare Vermont matches a host (the person who provides the unit) with a guest (the person who moves into the unit) for the mutual benefit of both parties. One-third of their current arrangements are rent only, one-third are chores accomplished in lieu of rent, and one-third are a combination of the two. There are several steps to each individually tailored match agreement, and either the host or the guest can say no at any step of the way (putting an end to that potential match):

* Application – they check out the host’s accommodations; the guest needs a private bedroom, private or shared bath, and shared common areas.
* Background checks and references – they do several different background and reference checks whether you’re applying as a host or a guest.
* Interview – they figure out compatibility by looking at the interests, needs, and lifestyle of the applicant.
* Match search – based on the interviews, they figure out what they think are compatible matches, but as stated above, either party can reject a match.
* Match introduction – this is a meet and greet between the two parties to introduce and get to know each other.
* Trial match – this is a two-week trial to see if it will indeed work out.
* Match agreement – This is when the match officially starts, with any special conditions agreed to by both parties. It can go on for as long as they would like but to dissolve a match you must provide 30 days’ notice.
* Match care – HomeShare Vermont will try to iron out any issues that come up over time between the host and guest.

HomeShare Vermont has 76 matches currently going on in the state (they serve northwest and central Vermont). Hosts range in age from 28 to 98 while the guests are between 22 and 80. If services are part of the agreement, these can be household chores (dishes, mowing/shoveling) but can’t be any medical services (bathing, administering meds). The biggest issues are pets and smoking; one party or the other does or doesn’t want one or both issues. In Chittenden County, there are not enough hosts for all the guests, while in rural Vermont there aren’t enough guests for all the hosts. For more information, you can go to [www.homesharevermont.org](http://www.homesharevermont.org) or their YouTube page <https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=homeshare+vermont>.

*ADU Forum Follow-Up:* Rocky is still on board with doing another forum. We all agreed on a fall presentation at the United Church of Hinesburg’s parish hall, just like last year, worked well. Rocky will check on the availability of the hall for October.

*Home Modification Follow-Up:* Dale investigated Cathedral Square’s Home Modification Program as described at our 4/26/23 meeting. The program provides free home upgrades to 62-year-old and older homeowners to make safety and accessibility improvements. There are income restrictions to qualify. More information is available at [www.cathedralsquare.org](http://www.cathedralsquare.org). Carl wondered if we should spread the word about this program. Dave supports any spreading of helpful info and we all agreed. Carl will have the town add the info to our web page and write a blurb for the Front Porch Forum, and Dale agreed to be the committee contact for anyone who is interested.

*Other Follow-Ups:* Additional items that required our attention:

* Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition Membership: As discussed at our 5/24/23 meeting, we are going to do a one-year membership from 10/1/23 to 9/30/24.
* Roberta MacDonald attended tonight’s meeting and is interested in our committee vacancy. She is going to pursue joining our committee with the Select Board.
* ARPA Funds – No news on how the town is planning to distribute these funds; the discussion is on hold due to the increased cost of the town sewer plant upgrades and how to fund that.
* Zoom Video Recordings – if a committee member has any issues with viewing any of our recorded meetings, Carl will send out a workaround supplied by the town to enable viewing.
* Meeting Schedule – In the past, we skipped either our July or August committee meetings but this year we will meet both months. Right now, we are still planning on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6 PM or 7 PM as required and continue with hybrid in-person/Zoom meetings.

*Consider Next Guests to Discuss Affordable Housing:* Some of the potential future speakers mentioned tonight include:

* Habitat for Humanity.
* Any local businesses that have employees who would like to live in town but can’t find housing.
* Committee member Andy Miller who could provide a Housing 101 presentation from a builder’s perspective.
* Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission – either to discuss how regional planning affects Hinesburg or to present the updated housing assessment.
* Someone from the state to explain Act 250 and how it affects the development of affordable housing.

*Approve Minutes from May 24th:* We reviewed the 5/24/23 minutes. Rocky motioned they are to be approved and Beth seconded. They were approved by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:55 PM.

**Next Meeting –**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Wernhoff

HAHC Secretary

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