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**Affordable Housing Committee**

Town of Hinesburg

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**Meeting Minutes – May 24, 2023**

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

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

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

**Also Present:** Alex Weinhagen (Director of Planning and Zoning, Town of Hinesburg), Darren Schibler (Senior Planner, CCRPC), and Jess Hyman (Statewide Housing Advocacy Program Director, CVOEO)

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

*Hinesburg Housing Needs Assessment Update:* Darren Schibler, Senior Planner for the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), has been working on updating the town’s Housing Needs Assessment. Last updated in 2017, it contains data on the current housing situation in the town. Darren will revise his current draft based on any recommendations from Alex and our committee. Darren gave us a brief presentation of his findings but said there are no surprises in this update. Darren’s presentation covered the following topics:

* General findings/summary
* Demographics and economic trends
* Housing market conditions
* Non-regulatory actions
* Regulatory actions

Dave asked Darren if HomeShare Vermont fits into any of this. Darren said it does, with the biggest issue being screening/matching folks up. Xander asked if there was a way to merge households under one roof, like how college students will share a unit. Darren said the easiest way to do that is to physically split up older/larger homes into multiple units.

The next steps for the update are to include any town edits, and any committee edits, and update the data tables. Darren requested we provide any feedback to him by 6/15/23. That would give Darren time to provide a final version by the end of June, which is also the end of our fiscal year.

*Affordable Housing Discussion:* Jess Hyman, Statewide Housing Advocacy Program Director for the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO), briefed us on the various programs they offer regarding housing advocacy, which are:

* Mobile Home Program
* Fair Housing Project
* HOME Family Housing Voucher Program
* Vermont Tenants

All these programs are geared towards increasing housing opportunities.

Jess then discussed all aspects of the current housing crisis: income levels, marginalization in any way (gender, race, etc.), new housing location, town services allocation, and zoning regulations, among others. She then had the following suggestions:

* Make aging-in-place more feasible
* Landlord Education
* Continue to promote Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
* Stop no-cause evictions
* Provide rent stabilization

Jess mentioned a good resource is <https://housingdata.org> which is a state directory of affordable rental housing. Another is the Housing Committee Toolkit partially sponsored by the Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) and CVOEO (<https://www.thrivingcommunitiesvt.org/toolkit/>).

Dale asked if there are any plans to have a network for affordable housing committees to share information. Jess mentioned the gatherings that the CCRPC has been organizing a few times a year for the last few years. Beth mentioned small landlords sometimes stumble into the role with varying success; is there Zoom training available for them? Jess said the Vermont Landlord Association would like to do broader meetings to build relationships between landlords and tenants. Xander asked if there was any information for potential small landlords. Jess said that isn’t specifically provided at this time.

*ADU Forum Follow-Up:* Rocky contacted Jim Jarvis, Hinesburg Zoning Administrator. Five of the fifty 2023 zoning permits are for ADUs. Three are ready for construction now while the other two are for future ADUs. Rocky and Jim thought that due to the continued interest in ADUs, it would be worthwhile to have another forum this fall like we did last October. Jim added that two of the five ADUs reallocated bedrooms to utilize existing septic systems. Jim thought it was good folks were learning the ins and outs of the permit process. Rocky is going to check if any of the five permit holders went to our forum last fall.

*ARPA Update:* The committee is asking for $50,000 in ARPA funds to go towards a housing fund. Meanwhile, the price for the town sewer plant upgrade is approximately $3M more than planned. The Select Board has put their discussions on the dispersal of the ARPA funds on hold until the sewer plant funding is figured out. Xander then pointed out that the upgraded sewer plant would also bring in additional housing.

*Home Modification Follow-Up:* At our 4/26/23 meeting, Cindy Reid from Cathedral Square discussed their home modification program. Carl asked if a subcommittee of one or two members would volunteer to investigate them. Dale volunteered to do it and will report back to the committee at a future meeting.

*Join Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition?:* Carl asked if our committee should join the Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition (VAHC; <https://www.vtaffordablehousing.org>). Per their website, they are “a coalition of over 90 members who work together to increase access to safe, decent, affordable housing in Vermont.” Carl will check into the membership fee, but maybe someone can look into it further. Dave thought it made sense to join. Jess knows of them and thought it was a great idea. She didn’t think you need to be a member to attend their monthly meeting.

*Consider Next Guests to Discuss Affordable Housing:* The Hinesburg Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee may join us at our June meeting. It was suggested a for-profit builder would be another good guest to have. Andy is going to work on that, but Andy will be out of town for the June meeting so it will have to be a later meeting for that. Xander suggested Habitat for Humanity would be good to speak to, and they are on the horizon for the Champlain Housing Trust project on the NRG property tentatively called Windy Ridge. Andy wondered if any developers have talked to our committee about impediments to affordable housing in Hinesburg. We explained we’ve spoken with the developers of Haystack Crossing, Hinesburg Center Phase 2, and Kelley’s Field 2 on multiple occasions, but can always speak to them again for the benefit of our newer members.

*New Member for Committee Vacancy:* Mary Beth Bowman had to resign last month from the committee. Thank you, Mary Beth, for your commitment and we all wish you the best. We are now down to eight members. If anyone is interested in joining our committee, please refer to the town website for info.

*Approve Minutes from April 26th:* We reviewed the 4/26/23 minutes. Xander motioned they are to be approved and Dale 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 8:05 PM.

**Next Meeting –**

June 28th – Time and topics to be determined; see agenda on the town website.

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Wernhoff

HAHC Secretary

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