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**Affordable Housing Committee**

Town of Hinesburg

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**Meeting Minutes – November 29, 2022**

**Remote Zoom Meeting – 7:00 PM**

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

**Also Present:** Brett Grabowski (developer of Hinesburg Center Ph. 2), Alex Weinhagen (Hinesburg Director of Planning and Zoning), and Mitch Cypes (Hinesburg Development Review Coordinator)

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

*Hinesburg Center Phase 2 Discussion:* Brett Grabowski updated us on his development which is currently going through its Subdivision Final Plat Review before the Hinesburg Development Review Board (DRB). Both phases will have a total of nine perpetually affordable units (PAUs). There is currently one unit in phase 1 so eight more are required. Brett wants to convert five units in phase 1 to PAUs, leaving three to be provided in phase 2. These three units will all be in building C on lot 52 of phase 2. This is a 34-unit multi-family building with ADA public access (some ground-floor units will also have private exterior entrances). All nine PAUs are planned to be a mix of studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units. None of them will be for-sale units; they will all be rentals. This is due to several reasons including, but not limited to, cost basis, exploding building material prices, and rising interest rates. Xander asked what the town could do to make for-sale PAUs a reality. Brett said, as an example, our water and sewer hookup fees are much higher than neighboring towns. Per Brett, Hinesburg charges $50/gallon for water and sewer while Williston charges $16/gallon. And the capacity you must pay for is three times the actual usage. Brett also said a multi-unit rental building has an economy of scale over a single-family unit since the rental building has one foundation, common entrances, and shared heating and cooling plants. Alex stated the town would like the bedroom ratio of the PAUs to match that of the market rate units, but currently, there are no plans for any three-bedroom affordable units, although Brett could try to get a waiver on this issue. Brett said he was open to shifting the locations of the PAUs if required. Alex suggested putting three units in the existing phase 1 buildings and six units in building C of phase 2. Dale added that if Brett located one unit in three of the phase 1 buildings and six units in building C, and convert one of those six units to a three-bedroom unit, that would be a good mix. Brett said that was doable. Emily agreed with Alex and Dale and added she was concerned about unit accessibility. Rocky stated that building C, being a public building, would be fully accessible with ramps if required and elevators between floors. Xander asked if certain size units were most in demand or if units of any size are in demand; the answer was all units, affordable and otherwise, are in demand in this area. Brett, Alex, and Mitch left at 8:10 PM. After further discussion, we agreed to recommend three PAUs in phase 1, and six in phase 2 (with one of them being a three-bedroom unit), with the additional stipulation that we’d like one of the units with a private entrance in building C to be one of the affordable units.

*Approve a $50,000 Grant to Cathedral Square for Kelley’s Field:* Hinesburg has a Revolving Loan Fund created by a Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) loan when Vermont Smoke & Cure came to town. The Select Board has approved a $50,000 grant from this fund to Cathedral Square for Kelley’s Field senior housing expansion project. The Select Board would like our committee to have a formal vote recommending the grant. Rocky moved we approve the $50,000 grant as stated. Mary Beth seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously by voice vote.

*ADU Forum Follow-Up:* Carl’s Zoom recording of our 10/20/22 Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) forum is now available on our committee’s page on the town website (<https://www.hinesburg.org/affordable-housing-committee>). He was hoping to follow up with attendees who provided their email addresses to get their feedback on the topic but hasn’t had a chance to do so. Rocky volunteered to follow up with the attendees. Carl will send Rocky the email addresses and any pertinent correspondence.

*Proposed Housing Fund Discussion:* Carl spoke to Alex about if we need specific ideas of items we want to fund. Alex said we don’t need specific ideas. The Select Board has parameters to go by to steer us in the proper direction. Below are some of the ideas we’ve had in prior discussions.

* Reducing connection and impact fees for those units
* Providing homeowner subsidies to bridge the gap between the market selling price and affordable selling price.
* Grants/loans for creating ADUs
* Create a land bank
* Cover the cost of solar panels (partial or full) to offset the costs of switching from natural gas to electrification as strongly desired by the Hinesburg Energy Committee
* Permit fees and other pre-development costs.

Xander thought the list above was fine, and Dale agreed.

*Budget Request for FY24:* There is no news on our budget request. We’re waiting to hear the results from the Select Board.

*ARPA Request for Housing:* We are going to ask for $50,000 of the town’s $1,300,000 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Dale said the worst that can happen is they say no. Dave attended a meeting with Todd Odit, Hinesburg Town Manager, about ARPA funds. Dave thought it might be a good idea if we send an official request for the funds to the Select Board so it’s in their meeting packets. Carl will send a memo to Todd and copy the rest of the committee.

*Housing Projects Update:*

* Haystack Crossing – The Development Review Board (DRB) approved their Subdivision Final Plat Review at their 11/1/22 meeting.
* Creekside (Hinesburg Center Phase 2) – See the discussion above.
* NRG – No new information on the status of this project.

*Preparation of Committee Report for the Town Report (addition to the agenda):* The due date for our summary of the HAHC activities for the last year for the town report is 12/9/22. Dale will finish it up this weekend and email it out to the committee for review, then submit it to the town.

*Committee Membership Discussion:* The Select Board approved our request to revert to a nine-member committee, and approved Beth Whitlock and Dave Nagel as our newest committee members. Welcome, Beth and Dave! We now have one more vacancy to fill. With the current interest in affordable housing, we’re confident we’ll be able to fill it shortly. The committee will pursue that after the holidays.

*Approve Minutes from October 25th:* We reviewed the 10/25/22 minutes. Mary Beth motioned they be approved and Xander seconded. They were approved by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:50 PM.

**Next Meeting –**

December 20th – Special time: 6:00 PM or 6:30 PM (T.B.D.) - Topics to be determined; see agenda on the town website.

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Wernhoff

HAHC Secretary

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