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**Affordable Housing Committee**

Town of Hinesburg

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**Meeting Minutes – February 22, 2023**

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

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

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

**Also Present:** Arthur Hamlin (State of Vermont Housing Program Coordinator)

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

*Affordable Housing Discussion:* Arthur Hamlin, Housing Program Coordinator for Mobile Home Parks from the State of Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, spoke to us about the role that mobile home parks play in affordable housing. Hinesburg currently has three registered mobile home parks:

* Mountain View Mobile Home Park; 52 lots; owned by the Housing Foundation, Inc.;
* Sunset Lake Cooperative; 55 units; resident-owned community; and
* Triple L Park; 65 units; owned by Ship Sevin I, LLC.

The average park size in Vermont is 15 lots, so these are considered “large” parks. The average lot rent per month in our three parks is about 20% higher than the statewide median lot rent, but lot fees in Chittenden County are higher than in the rest of the state.

Arthur works on mobile home park residents’ rights. If there are any violations, the state can issue fines and/or penalties. Generally, the parks take care of any issues themselves. None of the Hinesburg parks have needed any mediation.

A park resident can apply for grants through the Vermont State Housing Authority. These grants can be used for repairs or a replacement slab. These grants help with infilling vacant lots. For 2022, two-thirds of the state mobile home parks are completely full, while there are 330 vacant lots and 55 abandoned homes.

Only 10% of mobile homes in Vermont are rentals. 90% of all units are owned by the residents. The USA average for owned residences is 71%. Vermont has a total of around 21,000 mobile homes.

The committee asked Arthur several questions, many regarding the likelihood of building new parks in the state. He said there were several factors involved with the ability to do that, including zoning, Act 250 requirements, and the NIMBY factor, among others, but Arthur thinks mobile home parks can help with the affordable housing crisis.

*New Committee Member:* Andy Miller is our newest member and joined the committee tonight for the first time. He gave us a quick background on what led him to our committee, and we all gave Andy a brief introduction. Our committee is now at a full nine members. Welcome, Andy!

*FY24 Budget Update:* There is currently $5000 in the fiscal year 2024 budget for our committee. There are no restrictions on how that money is to be used per Todd Odit, Hinesburg Town Manager. This means we can put it all towards the housing fund we are trying to establish while at the same time using whatever we may need for committee operating expenses. Regarding the housing fund, there is no mention of it in the annual Town Report. We agreed that Carl would write up a post for the Front Porch Forum to inform the community about this potential fund.

*ADU Forum Follow-Up:* Rocky said 19 people provided email addresses at our Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) forum held on 10/20/22. Rocky received feedback stating that some type of informational handouts would have been helpful. In relation to a state program to promote ADUs we discussed at our 12/20/22 meeting, Rocky found eight ADUs in Chittenden County that would have a chance for the grant. Unfortunately, none of them are shovel-ready which is a stipulation of applying for the grant. He doesn’t know if there will be another round of funding by the state for this grant. If he gets any new information, he will send it out to us.

*Housing Projects Update:*

* Haystack Crossing: No news; approval was granted by the Development Review Board (DRB) on 11/1/22.
* Hinesburg Center Phase 2: The DRB is still deliberating final approval.
* Kelley’s Field 2: We’ll get a complete update on this at our March meeting.
* NRG: We should get a complete update on this at our March meeting.

*Report on Jan 30 CCRPC Meeting of Housing Committees:* Beth and Carl attended this meeting via Zoom. It is hosted by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) every few months to get a feel for the issues the local housing committees are dealing with. The main topic of this meeting was rental housing inspection. Burlington has a program in place for this. Beth thought this was a great idea and was wondering if this could be done on a county-wide level to help spread the cost among the smaller towns. She was also wondering how we could work with other affordable housing committees in the area to share ideas. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for 7/31/23. Mary Beth said she could check with the town’s Planning & Zoning Department to see if there are any known issues with the quality of Hinesburg’s affordable housing, and Rocky said he would do likewise with the town’s Health Officer.

*Consider Fair Housing Proclamation in April:* April is Fair Housing Month, and last year we did a proclamation in support of fair housing. It was a combination of the state version and the Burlington version. When Carl read it last year at the Select Board meeting, one person suggested that the proclamation include language not discriminating against those who have been incarcerated or that have a criminal record. We debated (A) whether to provide a proclamation for this year and (B) whether to include non-discriminatory language. Xander said yes to both, stating those with records are often screwed by the system. Beth mentioned the proclamation should also contain language banning discrimination due to race. Carl is going to write something up for review at our next meeting.

*Consider Next Guests to Discuss Affordable Housing:* At our next meeting, we’ll speak with Cindy Reid from Cathedral Square, and hopefully with Amy Demetrowitz from Champlain Housing Trust, who had to cancel joining us tonight due to the weather.

*Approve Minutes from January 25th:* We reviewed the 1/25/23 minutes. Xander motioned they are to be approved and Rocky seconded. They were approved by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 PM.

**Next Meeting –**

March 22nd – Time and topics to be determined; see agenda on the town website.

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Wernhoff

HAHC Secretary



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