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**Affordable Housing Committee**

Town of Hinesburg

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**Meeting Minutes – April 26, 2023**

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

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

**Committee Members Present:** Carl Bohlen, Mary Beth Bowman, Emily Mars Raymond, Rocky Martin, Beth Whitlock, Andy Miller, Xander Patterson

**Also Present:** Cindy Reid (Cathedral Square), Chad Simmons (Vermont Housing Finance Agency)

**Public Present:** Mark Hall (chair of the Richmond Affordable Housing Committee – [markphall@gmail.com](mailto:markphall@gmail.com))

The meeting came to order at approximately 7:05 P.M. The meeting was recorded on Zoom.

*Presentation* - Chad Simmons from the Vermont Housing Finance Agency gave a presentation on “The State of Vermont Housing.” VFHA finances and promotes affordable housing throughout the state via tax credits and loans for developers, mortgages, and down payment assistance for homebuyers, monitors safety among rental housing, and researches and works with communities to promote more affordable housing. Vermont Housing Needs Assessment said the state needs between 30k-40k more housing units to meet needs before 2030. Vermont’s rental vacancy rate is 3.2 percent, among the lowest in the nation. The median home price is now $310k. Vermont has a high rate of vacant properties for seasonal use. 15 percent of Vermont households spend more than half of their income on housing. Chad highlighted HousingData.org. He talked about ways to increase housing stock: new construction, conversions from one type of building to primary homes, ADUs, and land donations from municipal and private partnerships. Rocky asked about the mobile home replacement program; VFHA partners with CHT to finance newer and more efficient mobile homes. Carl asked about the “missing middle home development program”; Chad said it was a pilot program and is funded for one more year and is designed for smaller developers both for-profit and non-profit. Carl asked about the treasurer’s office’s “10 percent for Vermont” funding (Cindy later said it was $85 million); Chad said VFHA is partnering with the treasurer’s office to invest money in housing.

*Presentation* – Cindy Reid from Cathedral Square gave the committee updates and said they are closing on Kelley’s Field 2 on May 4. There will be a large community room, telehealth room, pavilion, gardens, and walking path in the new project. Cindy said the project has 17 sources of capital and will cost $11.4 million. Cindy thanked the committee for advocacy. She said the town helped the project bypass Act 250 and that saved time and money. Cindy said permitting and impact fees including water/sewer came out to $260k for the 24 units. The town provided a $50k grant through the town revolving loan fund to reduce impact fees and that helped keep the project affordable. Cindy talked about a home modification program through a HUD grant that can help Hinesburg residents modify homes to put in ramps and grab bars for older adults to age in place. Cindy said the committee could advocate for a bigger cut of federal and state tax credits. She mentioned senate bill S100 which needs advocacy to take out the cap on housing density. Carl asked about Kelley’s Field 2 availability. Cindy said they are building an inquiry list but will do community outreach about six months before opening to fill units. Cindy said they expect the project to be complete in July 2024.

*Discussion about ADU Forum follow-up* – One resident wanted to apply for the grant program but changed their mind. Rocky said the grant program would be dried up by the end of the year as it has been a popular program. Carl asked if we should plan another forum. Mary Beth and Rocky said the information is already out there so we may not need to repeat it. Rocky will check with Jim Jarvis about the interest level in ADUs.

*Discussion about Perpetual Affordability* – We may have $50k from ARPA and $50k from the revolving loan fund. Carl asked if we prioritize perpetual affordability or require it for funding. Carl proposed we keep the option open and see how Selectboard and Town Manager react. Andy stated we should be flexible with funds if possible.

*Discussion about Housing Project Updates* – Kelley’s Field 2 is breaking ground in less than a month. No updates on Hinesburg Center 2 or Windy Ridge/ NRG property. Haystack Crossing on Act 250 and scheduled to break ground in winter 2024. Laster Project on Mechanicsville has phase one.

*Discussion about CVOEO Housing Panel follow-up* - Beth attended the meeting and said renters can have a hard time getting on committees because often boards require a 3+ year commitment. She said we could offer shorter terms to reduce that barrier and increase the representation of renters.

*Discussion about guests to discuss affordable housing* – Jeff Hyman of Thriving Communities will come to our meeting in May. Darren Schibler of the Regional Planning Commission will also come and update us on the housing needs assessment for Hinesburg. The schedule is full for May, so we will discuss June’s guests at our next meeting.

*Discussion of meeting format and May 24 start time* – A 6 p.m. start time is proposed and approved. Rocky is to continue meeting at the town hall and keeping a hybrid format.

*Approve Minutes from March 22nd* - We reviewed the 3/22/23 minutes. Xander motioned they are to be approved and Mary Beth seconded. They were approved by voice vote.

*Motion to Adjourn:* Carl made the motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:25 P.M.

**Next Meeting** –

May 24 – 6 p.m. start time; see agenda on the town website.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Mars Raymond  
HAHC Member



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