



## **Affordable Housing Committee**

Town of Hinesburg

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### **Meeting Minutes – October 19, 2023 In-person and Zoom Meeting – 7:00 PM (Town Hall Third Floor Conference Room)**

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

*Call to Order:* The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:10 PM.

*Additions/Deletions to Agenda:* Carl provided a quick summary of the groundbreaking ceremony for Kelley's Field 2, which Carl, Dave, Xander, and Dale attended. Our committee was called out by several different speakers in a positive way for the role we played in the project to this point.

*Public Comment:* There was no public present.

*Finalize FY25 Budget Request:* Carl met with Hinesburg Town Manager Todd Odit and Assistant Town Manager Joy Dubin Grossman on 10/18/23 to discuss our budget request. While the meeting was very positive, there is no spare money in the town's funds right now. There is \$50,000 earmarked for our committee in the town's revolving loan fund. That money we've discussed using as a grant for the Champlain Housing Trust (CHT) Windy Ridge project of affordable housing north of the NRG building, although Todd would prefer it to be a loan that is repaid. We asked the town for \$50,000 from the ARPA funds to put towards a housing fund but we may not get anything. The repairs to the town hall roof will be \$400,000, all of which is coming from the ARPA funds, and there are other expenses as well. We are scheduled to present our request at the Select Board's 12/13/23 meeting. From the town budget for FY25, we are asking for \$500 in operating expenses and \$10,000 for the housing fund.

Xander has been wondering if providing \$50,000 to CHT in a \$11,000,000 project is just a drop in the bucket and if it does anything for them. Rocky responded that it helps with getting other funding sources on board when a town committee is willing to provide funds for a project. Beth mentioned it also helps with some grants that may have matching funds. Andy agreed with both statements, saying this would help CHT go after additional funding. Carl said it looks good when a funding source is debating who gets their money, and a project has the backing of the town at any funding level.

Carl said the impact and hookup fees (which are to be confirmed) that CHT must pay the town are over \$1,000,000. Xander's other question was would the town be able to waive some of these fees instead of us providing a grant or loan. Carl said CHT tried to do that, but the town stated it impacts other users of these systems (water, wastewater, etc.).

Dave asked if we ask for \$50,000 and clearly define it as for the Windy Ridge project, would it go directly through? Rocky said it probably would have to be a separate article that is voted on by the public. Dave then asked if we said we'd like to use the \$50,000 from the revolving loan fund for Windy Ridge if there would be anything wrong with that. Carl responded there would be nothing wrong with that, and that CHT may be working on a request at this moment.

Another topic from Carl's meeting with Todd and Joy that came up was a property on Mechanicsville Road. This is a property that we have looked at before for a possible Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity (GMHFH) project. At the time we investigated it, the owners were not ready to sell. According to Todd, he called them and now they are considering selling. Carl passed on the information to GMHFH. Todd believes they could build five units there, but Carl thinks GMHFH may try a quadplex. If the owners go through with the sale, we'll work with the town and GMHFH in whatever capacity they need. One possibility is to use part of the \$10,000 in our budget request to help with the property taxes for one year while GMHFH gets the project organized.

After additional discussion, we decided to ask for \$50,000 in ARPA funds, and along with the \$50,000 from the revolving loan fund, appropriate \$100,000 for Windy Ridge. We would hold onto the \$10,500 in our budget request, with any unused housing funds staying in the fund (unused operating expenses would revert to the town). Rocky said we should investigate setting up an actual fund. Andy said we should ask for \$10,000 from the town budget every year to rebuild the fund into something substantial that can be used for other projects in the future.

*ADU Forum Follow-up:* This year we are not doing a Zoom recording of the forum, but Carl is wondering if there is some other way to record it. Dave may still have a microphone that plugs into a cell phone. He has in the past been able to record videos and upload them in this format. He's going to check with his son to see if this would be feasible in this application. Rocky, Xander, and Dale are going to meet at the United Church of Hinesburg Parish Hall at 10 AM on 10/23/23 to stage the forum. Dave is going to bring the flyers he has for Cathedral Square's Home Modification Program. Rocky is going to print off the announcement that Emily made with a list of the evening's presenters. Emily is going to write an article covering the event for the local papers and take photos as she did last year. Andy asked if any local banks provide any kind of flexible financing for the construction of ADUs and suggested that if we do another forum to have some local lenders on hand as well. Carl and Emily will bring refreshments.

*Establish Priorities for Committee's Work Plan:* At our 9/20/23 meeting, we went through a list Carl compiled of several of the issues our committee has dealt with or should deal with over the years. At that meeting, we prioritized the items using a numerical system. Tonight, we spent time fine-tuning the rankings to come up with a doable list of items on which to concentrate our efforts. We also tried to separate the items that are ongoing instead of one-offs.

*Motion to Adjourn:* Xander motioned to adjourn, and Rocky seconded. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:55 PM.

## **Next Meeting –**

October 25<sup>th</sup> – Time and topics to be determined; see agenda on the town website.

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Wernhoff  
HAHC Secretary