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**Affordable Housing Committee**

Town of Hinesburg

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**Meeting Minutes – January 25, 2023**

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

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

**DRAFT – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL**

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

**Also Present:** Alex Weinhagen (Hinesburg Director of Planning and Zoning) and Kathy Beyer (Senior Vice President for Real Estate Development at Evernorth)

The meeting came to order at approximately 6:00 PM.

*Affordable Housing Discussion:* Alex Weinhagen, Director of Planning and Zoning for the Town of Hinesburg, provided us with a summary of affordable housing in Hinesburg. The town’s role in affordable housing includes:

* The framework – setting the ground rules via good zoning;
* Infrastructure – water, sewer, sidewalks, roads, on-street parking;
* Funding – any sources that get funding through the town; and
* Designation programs – the town works with the state to achieve special designations, such as Village Centers (the core of our town) and Neighborhood Development Areas (which will apply to Kelley’s Field 2).

The town sees the Hinesburg Affordable Housing Committee (HAHC) role as to both educate about and advocate for affordable housing with citizens, town boards, and developers.

The Town Plan is the controlling document regarding affordable housing. It was last updated in 2017 and is done every eight to ten years, with the next update scheduled for 2025. Each town committee will review its particular action items in 2024 and provide suggestions. There is also an update of our 2017 Housing Needs Assessment which should be done this summer. In addition, the town has hired a consultant to look at modernizing the zoning bylaws, which should be complete by the fall.

Current or upcoming large projects in town that have an affordable housing component include Haystack Crossing, Hinesburg Center Phase 2, Kelley’s Field 2, and the Champlain Housing Trust (CHT) project on land near NRG Systems.

Current infrastructure issues are:

* Water capacity – the town is waiting for the new well on the Haystack Crossing site to come online. Until it does (hopefully this fall), there is no capacity for the CHT project;
* Sewer capacity – the town’s wastewater treatment facility is undergoing a major upgrade but the price is much higher than the bond. The town is looking for additional funding sources; and
* Hinesburg Community School capacity – the school district says they only have the capacity for potential students from the Haystack Crossing and Hinesburg Center Phase 2 developments.

Committee members then had a question-and-answer session with Alex regarding affordable housing issues, which was informative and greatly appreciated by all members. Alex left at approximately 6:40 PM.

Kathy Beyer, Senior Vice President for Real Estate Development at Evernorth, addressed the committee next. Evernorth is a nonprofit organization that provides affordable housing and community investments in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. They partnered with CHT on the Green Street project and are partnering with Cathedral Square Corporation on Kelley’s Field 2.

Part of the lack of affordable housing in Vermont is that we should have been building 2400 units per year since 1985 but Vermont missed that volume year after year. Another cause is the current demographics. 70% of rentals today are one or two-person rentals which take up much more housing stock than larger families would. Ideally, we would be building all housing sizes: small Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), smaller homes, and multi-family buildings in addition to the concentration on single-family homes. Kathy also encourages increased density where the infrastructure allows it.

Kathy also provided answers to several inquiries that committee members had regarding affordable housing for extremely low-income households, funding sources, and rentals versus purchased affordable housing issues, among other topics. Kathy left at 7:10 PM.

Long-serving committee members gave a brief history of the committee to the newer members, specifically regarding our work with the mobile home communities in town. Our committee is down one member, and it was suggested it might be beneficial if this post could be filled by a park resident. We’re going to pursue that.

*FY24 Budget Update:* There was no change to our committee’s budget request for the fiscal year 2024. For additional information, see the minutes for our special 1/11/23 meeting regarding this topic.

*ADU Forum Follow-Up:* Rocky is working on following up with attendees of our 10/20/22 ADU forum. He also provided further information on a Vermont program to promote ADUs that was first discussed at our 12/20/22 meeting. It turns out that only 20% of the overall funding from this program will be going toward ADUs, which is less than we had originally anticipated. Your project must be shovel-ready when your application is put in, and the ADU must be completed within 18 months or there are penalties involved.

*Housing Projects Update:* The hearing for the Hinesburg Center Phase 2 development has been closed. Approval by the Development Review Board is pending.

*Hinesburg Housing Needs Assessment Update*: This was provided by Alex earlier in the evening.

*Consider Next Guests to Discuss Affordable Housing:* We’re going to try to continue with two speakers per meeting and one meeting per month for the foreseeable future. Xander was interested in hearing from someone who works on mobile home parks, possibly a person from the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development. Somebody who deals with funding sources would be good as well, like Champlain Housing Trust.

*Committee Membership Discussion:* As mentioned above, we’d like to see if there is any interest from a resident of one of our mobile home parks in joining our committee.

*Approve Minutes from December 20th and January 11th:* We reviewed both the 12/20/22 and 1/11/23 minutes. Beth motioned they be approved and Dave seconded. They were both approved by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:45 PM.

**Next Meeting –**

February 25th – Time and topics to be determined; see agenda on the town website.

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Wernhoff

HAHC Secretary

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