



Affordable Housing Committee

Town of Hinesburg
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Meeting Minutes - July 26, 2023 In-person and Zoom Meeting - 7:00 PM (Town Hall Third Floor Conference Room)

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

Also Present: David Mullin (Chief Executive Officer for Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity) and Taylor Newton (Planning Program Manager for Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission)

Public Present: Brigitte Thompson

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

Affordable Housing Discussion with David Mullin of Green Mountain HFH: David Mullin, Chief Executive Officer for Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity (GMHFH), provided our committee with an overview of their mission. Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) is worldwide. GMHFH is a federated organization, meaning they get no funding from HFHI, but instead raise all their funds on a local level. GMHFH builds five to six houses per year but hopes to increase that to ten per year. They build a mix of single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes, reasoning they can split the land cost between multi-family buildings. They currently cover Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle, and Lamoille counties. They only do homeownership, not rental properties, so people can build equity. Their houses are super-efficient but not fancy; they put their funds into making the home as economical to own as possible. For example, a 1200 SF home in Milton that is heated with gas and has a gas stove only requires \$400 per year in fuel for heating and cooking. All their homes have mechanical ventilation systems to bring in fresh air.

GMHFH homes are perpetually affordable. They obtain this using a shared equity model. A home takes eight to ten months to build and typically involves 300 to 400 volunteers. The family (selected beforehand) is also required to put in 400 hours of sweat equity on their home. GMHFH charges the new homeowner what their cost is on the home. The new homeowners end up paying less than when they were renting.

Carl asked what the equity split was. David said the homeowner receives 25% of any equity at the time of sale while the remaining 75% stays with the house to help with the affordability for the next buyer. Roberta asked if they had ever done a development. David said they have. They've also done a subdivision in a for-profit development that matches the other homes in build quality. Dave wanted to know what the top-end price for a lot in Chittenden County is, to which David said \$150,000 if all the infrastructure (power, water, sewer, road) is in place. Dave also wanted to know

how much charitable donations accounted for in their funding. David said much of their funding is individual donations, mostly monetary. They've only had land donated twice in the 40 years they have been in business.

Some of the items that increase their costs include:

- Burlington and South Burlington now require the main source of heat to be electric. This adds \$6000 to the cost of the home plus more money down the line for the homeowner.
- Requests for net-zero homes, which are more expensive than even a highly efficient home.
- Landscaping (and other non-unit related) costs; at a home they built in South Burlington they were required to provide \$10,000 in landscaping.

Emily asked if they would do any rehabilitation work or only build from scratch. David said they have done rehabs but those are usually snapped up by the private sector before GMHFH has a chance to look at them. Beth asked if they would install solar panels at the time of construction. David said yes but they worry about what happens to the panels 15 years down the line, so they lean towards a community solar for shared cost. Andy asked if there is a preferred model. David said the demand for housing is so high that they are open to anything, but a single-family ranch is the easiest. Andy also inquired if GMHFH has its own designs, which David said they do.

David stated if you want your funds to stay local then donate to GMHFH. If you donate to HFHI the funds could go anywhere except here. Xander asked how the homeowner builds equity. David said they do a fair market appraisal when the home is built and when it is sold. The homeowner receives 25% of the difference between appraisals. Xander also asked if they provide financing for their houses. David said they do finance some of them.

Regional Planning Overview Discussion with Taylor Newton of CCRPC: Taylor Newton, Planning Program Manager for the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), explained their role. One of the CCRPC's jobs is to assist municipalities in planning issues while another is to prepare a regional plan every eight years. Every May the CCRPC does a Unified Planning Work Program which is a list of the projects they are going to tackle in the upcoming fiscal year (July 1st to June 30th). They will ask the towns in November if there are any projects the town would like CCRPC to work on in the following year; for example, when they did our Housing Needs Assessment update this past spring.

The Hinesburg Town Plan expires in 2025. After that year, the state will set housing goals for each county in the CCRPC regional plan. The goal will be the total number of units, not just affordable units. The CCRPC will then municipalize that goal and break it down to how many units each town should be adding per year. Andy asked if there were any implications if those numbers are not met, but Taylor said there are not. Beth wanted clarification that the CCRPC will provide the total number of units, but that Hinesburg will determine how many of those are to be affordable, and Taylor said that is correct.

Taylor also said the CCRPC organizes a semi-annual regional convening, which is a get-together of regional planners to go over the latest information and share their experiences. They had planned to do one this summer, but it will be in October instead.

In 2016 the CCRPC started a Building Homes Together campaign, with the goal of adding 500 total housing units (150 of which would be affordable) per year. In 2021 they bumped the goal up to 1000 units (250 affordable). In most years they have not been able to meet these goals.

On their website (www.ccrpcvt.org) they have several resources, including data and maps for easy reference such as the [Chittenden County Housing Dashboard](#). Taylor spends time encouraging municipalities to simplify their permitting process. Other methods towns can use to help with the housing crunch are housing committees, housing trust funds, grant funding, and/or providing land. Carl asked what the CCRPC is doing to help the missing middle housing crunch. Taylor said it is tough to do because developers say there is no money to be made to provide that kind of housing. Andy asked if there are any plans to include the missing middle in their data collection. Taylor said they know they need to do a better job of passing that info on.

ADU Forum Follow-Up: Brigitte Thompson is currently building an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) in Hinesburg and was curious if there was any new information she should know about. We told her we're planning on another forum in October, and Emily asked her what she would like to see at a forum. Brigitte provided the following feedback:

- What are the steps involved?
- What do they need to do on a state level, a local level, and/or a neighborhood level?
- What is involved in the permitting process?
- A checklist would be helpful.
- How should they design it, as a part of their main home or detached?

Rocky emailed Carl that the parish hall at the United Church of Hinesburg is available on 10/19/23 or 10/26/23. Emily will design a flyer. We may or may not do a Zoom option. Beth said a handout available on our web page would be helpful. Beth also found an ADU checklist from the Vermont Department of Housing & Community Development available [here](#) as a downloadable PDF.

Home Modification Follow-Up: Carl contacted Cathedral Square about their program and is working on a Front Porch Forum post to spread the word. The post will include the Cathedral Square contact and Dale, who will be the committee contact.

Consider Development of a Work Plan: At our next meeting we are going to produce a work plan on what to do next. Roberta asked if we could meet in person to go over this. Xander said it would be good to pick two or three items to pursue, and Andy agreed.

Consider Next Guests to Discuss Affordable Housing: Due to the work plan above, we won't entertain guests at our next meeting.

Meeting Schedule for the Rest of 2023: We'll meet on August 23rd in person to go over the above, and we'll stick with the fourth Wednesday of the month at either 6 PM or 7 PM as required.

Approve Minutes from June 28th: We reviewed the 6/28/23 minutes. Xander motioned they are to be approved and Andy seconded. They were approved by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 PM.

Next Meeting -

August 23rd - Time and topics to be determined; see agenda on the town website.

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Wernhoff
HAHC Secretary

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