

Waterbury Housing Task Force Meeting
Thursday, January 18th, 2024 | 6:00-8:00 pm
Zoom meeting

MINUTES:

Attendees: Joe Camaratta, Chris Balzano, Madeleine Young, Mary Ellen Lamson, Eliza Novick-Smith, Owen Sette-Ducati, Skip Flanders, & Mary Koen

Called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm

Review Agenda

No changes were made to the agenda.

- First priority to review presentation for Select Board on Monday
- Review 2023 accomplishments

Review and approve minutes from the 12/21/23 meeting:

Changed “Vote for who would like to recommend a registry to the Select Board (without restrictions or fees)” to “Vote for who would like to recommend a registry to the Select Board (without restrictions or fees, *if possible*)”

Chris makes a motion to approve the minutes from 12/21/23. Eliza seconds the motion

Relevant Task force Updates

- Zoning bylaw meetings on February 20th and March 14th.
 - Zoning bylaw efforts have been with housing in mind
- Act 250 reform ideas on the table: property tax help, 5 year reassessment freeze

Update on on-going Initiatives

- Review and edit presentation for the Select board
 - Joe to make small edits that we discussed
 - Discussed the point that by having the registry, we can gain useful data. Once we have data we can continue to decipher how we can add all types of housing, and ultimately make better decisions/recommendations.
- Review and edits of 2023 accomplishments
 - Joe makes a motion to accept the document as it stands. Owen seconds the motion. Motion accepted.
- 2023 Unfinished Business (put together by Joe)
 - At its September 2023 meeting, the task force approved a motion to create affordability guidelines for new housing projects based on income for current and future Waterbury residents. This action item is still outstanding.
 - An initial effort to use the town’s parcel map to inventory the designated downtown and list potential opportunities was started (note: this supports

action 7 from the Municipal Plan and recommendation 3 from the Waterbury Housing Study below). Karen Nevin from RW informed the task force that a similar effort is being considered by the state in 2024, so the task force agreed to put this topic on hold so as not to duplicate effort.

- The task force pivoted to finding a vacant lot where it could engage developers to understand the process and barriers for gaining approval for new housing (note: this supports recommendation 4 from the Waterbury Housing Study below). Several opportunities have been discussed, but none have been selected.
 - In response to the July flood, the task force agreed to develop a website for residents listing information that flood victims could use for finding temporary housing or get assistance with utilities and funding. An outline was distributed for comment on October 19, 2023, but no further action has been decided.
 - A motion was approved at the September meeting to look into incentives for developers for creating long term housing units (note: this supports recommendation
- 2024 Objectives discussion
 - Discuss development barriers. Discuss identifying steps in the building review process that may be blockers/slowdowns for builders and contractors. More precisely distinguished guidelines may be helpful to streamline the process.
 - Incentives for development
 - Skip mentioned the granite shed construction (historic) had a 5 or 10 year property tax deferral
 - How much housing do we need?
 - Location for housing? Larger lots in Waterbury means less housing. Flood zones have impacted viability.
 - What are the income targets for potential owners/rentals?
 - How much supply can result from improved “infill development”?
 - 5% rental vacancy and 3% market house vacancy is a good amount.
 - Waterbury is at 1.3% rental vacancy and 1% market house vacancy
 - Increasing density rather than building new?

Next Meeting:

- Gain feedback from the Select board presentation, potential for discussion
- Eliza asked Joe to pick one bullet point from above to focus the priority on for the next meeting.
- Finalize 2024 objective guidelines (or the first few months)
- Brainstorm who the developer we would like to bring in, and what questions we would like to ask them.

Meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm