

Waterbury Housing Task Force Meeting

Thursday, May 16th, 2024 | 6:00-8:00 pm

Zoom meeting

MINUTES:

Attendees: Joe Camaratta, Chris Balzano, Madeleine Young, Skip Flanders, Alyssa Johnson, Mary-Ellen Lamson, Kati Gallagher, & Eliza Novick-Smith. Guests Kaziah Haviland and Mary Koen.

Called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm

Review Agenda

No changes to the agenda

Review and approve minutes from the 04/18/23 meeting:

Changed from “Called the meeting to order at 6:01 am” to

Called the meeting to order at 6:01 **pm**”

Minutes approved.

Relevant Task force Updates

- First public hearing on updated downtown & mixed use zoning
 - There was a lot of feedback about what the proposed zoning for Single family homes
 - We cannot add more single family homes in these districts
 - Questions about subdivision came up
 - Second public hearing on Monday 5/20
- Rental Registry will be discussed at the hearing as well.
 - Short & Long term rentals, no cost for the registry.
 - Long term goal (1 year?)
- Representative Stevens suggested that there are tools to help achieve dense development in other ways - ie: Transfer of development fund
- EFUD is prepared for more housing. Water and sewage demand has gone down since 2020 (less employees at the State Complex, change in habits, etc).

Update on on-going Initiatives

- Kaziah Haviland - Village Trust Program Director for Vermont Council on Rural Development. Background as an Architect, and experience working with Downstreet.
 - Former Project Manager for 51 S. Main street project
 - Village Trust Program - revitalization and development of small towns (2,500 or less) into the hands of the people. Develop brown field sites into the type of development that the town sees fit (ie: daycare, coffee shop, etc)

Markets, sport events, etc.). Word of mouth will spread this as well.

- The public is most afraid about what they do not know about.
- Education on questions to ask contractors and architects to stay on budget.
 - Offer a list of qualified Architects
- Education on how to gain DRB approval.
- Education on first time Landlord education and services
- “Home stores” - show others a recently build home/ADU
- Waterbury has a geographically constrained development area for greenspace lots.
 - Change use types and permitting.
 - This does remove larger players like Downstreet or external developers from developing, but allows local property owners to develop.
 - Redevelopment and additions are maybe needed here.
 - Perhaps this is where we can educate homeowners.
 - How do you find people who may otherwise not be interested?
 - Where do people meet? Talk to the public!
- Funding?
 - State and government funding. Some donations.
 - There are a lot of requirements and reporting when using funding.
- Early successes will build community motivation.
 - How do we keep local contractors on the local jobs and available?
 - Provide opportunity for local contractors to start or nurture their own business, also guarantee them work.
- Do rural towns still have a large need for housing compared to places like Waterbury (where restaurant workers need housing, etc.)?
 - Yes, senior housing is an issue. Seniors would like to stay in the community but do not need/cannot afford their large homes.
 - Varies by community.
 - Need options for all types of people in all stages of life.
 - Can offer small grants to make homes accessible (Housing Trust)
 - Important to have education on what it is and what it will be used for before it is voted on.
- Any wisdom on longer term housing solutions?
 - Scalable solutions.
 - Improve infrastructure and removing barriers
 - Preemptive education on development sites. Having the community know that housing is needed certainly helps.
 - Host a meeting on finding local contractors who are available.
 - Do not get hung up on one thing, focus on all areas.

- Help homeowners with the DRB process and what to expect.
 - Can we align with the DRB's structure to streamline the process?
- Can architects, contractors, civil engineers, etc, donate ~10 hours a year to help with community housing projects?

Next Meeting:

- Discuss next steps on how to start with education and outreach
 - Start small - goal to start this summer
 - Website accessibility
 - 1 page flier/guide
- Can we gather folks who have recently built/renovated infill development to share information?
 - Create an inventory of contractors? (Katie to gather permits to show information on recent projects?)
 - Can we gather folks for case studies?
 - Eliza to create an email/call template for outreach.
- Recommendations from Amy Tomasso
- Guest visit from another regional Housing Task Force or from a developer?

Meeting adjourned at 8:18 pm