

Minutes of the Meeting of the Waterbury Housing Task Force May 15, 2025

Attendees: Skip Flanders, Jess Neubalt, Joe Camarratta, Chris Balzano, Alyssa Johnson, Cheryl Casey | Via Zoom: Owen Sette-Ducati, Em Lamson.

Joe called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

Review agenda and approve April minutes

Chris made a motion to approve the minutes from the April meeting. The motion was seconded by Skip and approved.

Relevant Task Force Updates

Selectboard:

Alyssa noted that input at the last Selectboard meeting regarding Stanley Wasson. There was a range of opinions: homeownership was mentioned, along with senior housing, and concerns about aesthetics. There were some folks concerned about additional development in the floodplain.

Joe asked about candidates for the open seat on the Task Force: still seeking a renter for the group.

Planning Commission:

Have completed the input sessions. The Task Force is interested to see the housing comments received from the survey and in-person events.

Revitalizing Waterbury:

Owen noted Volunteer Fair 1-3 pm at Brookside Elementary School on May 17. Habitat for Humanity is one of the participating non-profits.

EFUD Annual Meeting:

Skip to arrange a time for Joe to present the Housing Task Force to the EFUD Board.

Flood Adaptation got Rehabbing Historic Buildings:

Recommendations from the National Park Service regarding established flood risk levels. Flood risk level. 2+ feet is the current standard. FEMA Community Rating System.

Current guidelines include 10 treatments grouped into 3 categories: keep water out, let water in, and avoid the water completely.

Alyssa commented on some of the FEMA buyouts.

Upcoming housing roundtable for CVRPC and CVEDC:

Meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 21 at the Old Labor Hall in Barre. Jess and Joe are serving on a panel at the meeting.

Continuing education series

Final session on Thursday: three folks in person and five people on Zoom. Still having a lot of audio issues, but ORCA recorded as well.

Overall, a strong library of information from the four workshops.

With respect to the permitting topic, there are still some pieces to fill in, and backfilling to make things easier to understand. Additional information and clarification - especially around the on-line permitting process. Consider making a video and recording narration to walk folks through the process.

Concern about cost for bringing an ADU online because can't make the numbers work.

Short form content and storytelling from data driven and emotional appeals are important to keep this at the forefront of issues in Waterbury

Town could use better the communication channels it has right now - graphics for social media on MailChimp etc

Short term rental AirBnB where does it overcome workforce housing: where is that tipping point? Interesting to do interviews with small business owners and employees about how easy or not easy it is to find a home and/or find a workforce. Anecdotally, State Parks regional hiring is really hard.

When she was with the state, Amy Tomasso encouraged us to use specific properties to highlight the opportunity for in-fill development. Eliza recommended building case studies from residents that have developed ADU's for long term rentals.

Waterbury received an additional grant from CVOEO for public outreach and awareness building for the Waterbury Housing Improvement Program.

Cheryl will prepare a final report for VCF and Selectboard.

Housing Trust Fund

Joe provided an outline of the allowable uses.

A motion to approve the outline of the Waterbury Housing Trust Fund was made by Skip, and seconded by Jess. Passed unanimously.

Program outline

Joe reviewed eligibility criteria and compliance for the Program following a recent discussion at the Select Board:

1. Rent eligibility
2. Tenant income eligibility

Chris made a motion to clean up and send to the Selectboard. Seconded by Skip. The motion was approved.

Joe will plan to present both Allowable Uses and the revised program to the Select Board on 6/2.

2025 objectives

Joe, Owen, Chris and Billy have done some outreach to developers. They noted that cost was a primary driver, but also discussed frustrations with the development process. Joe will summarize issues for review.

Chris and Joe had a call with the Montpelier Housing Task Force to review their suggestions to the City on ways to improve housing. Joe will distribute those suggestions for review by the Task Force, and arrange for someone from the Montpelier group to join a future meeting.

Owen and Joe will plan an outreach to employers (including contractors) to get their feedback on employer housing programs listed in VHFA's Employer-Assisted Housing in Vermont Resource Guide.

Town Rental Registry

Up and running! 130 registries >> 670/800 rentals

Coherent strategy for registering: what is purpose and what it should be used for: hurdles for people responding to them. Out there and repeated!

Educational approach is good, but the educational strategy is lacking.

Joe to include Mike on June's agenda.

Housing Task Force input for upcoming panel session

Recommendation for changes to housing development in Central Vermont and improving community's understanding of housing development:

- Clarify scope of DRB and design criteria considered.
- Revisit state fire safety regulations for additions on ADU's for long-term rentals (especially those attached to an existing structure).
- Diversity discussion and consideration of beneficiaries of affordable housing to include homeownership.
- Attitude of people administering regulations makes a big difference. Encourage more partnership and consultative approach with developers.
- Highlight success stories of small scale development.

Adjourn- Skip!!!! At 8:02 pm