

Selectboard & Planning Board Housing Subcommittee Meeting via Zoom
Tuesday, September 20, 2022

Revised and Approved

1. CALL TO ORDER HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING – Chairperson Leigh Davis called to order the Selectboard and Planning Board Housing Subcommittee meeting at 1:03pm.
2. ROLL CALL - Leigh Davis, “present,” Jonathan Hankin, “present,” Garfield Reed, “present,” Malcolm Fick, “present”.
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – J. Hankin moved to approve the August 9, 2022 draft minutes. M. Fick seconded. All voted yes.
4. SUBCOMMITTEE’S ANNOUNCEMENTS/STATEMENTS – Chairperson Davis began the meeting with a statement pointing out that housing and housing security is a widespread national issue and wished to commend many of the local stakeholders who are addressing solutions to the problem. She mentioned the Town’s Affordable Housing Trust; the Town’s Community Preservation Committee; Chris Rembold, the Assistant Town Manager; Construct, the CDC, Berkshire Housing, BRPC and 1Berkshires as organizations that have already had a significant impact on Great Barrington housing.
5. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Chairperson Davis introduced a draft Housing Planning Worksheet and explained the columns on the document, which are designed to provide status and visibility into housing initiatives addressed by the committee.
 - i. M. Fick suggest columns that describe the costs (both monetary and effort) and the benefits of each initiative so that the committee can make informed recommendations.
 - ii. J. Hankin expressed interest in creating or endorsing a housing advocacy group of citizens who can provide balanced opinions regarding housing initiatives that seem to automatically create neighborhood opposition.
 - iii. G. Reed suggested that we invite Construct, CDC and other interested parties to comment on the Housing Planning Worksheet and suggest other ways the Town can foster housing growth.
 - b. Chairperson Davis introduced the topic of the 2020 Housing Needs Assessment created for the Town by BRPC. She asked about the status of items on the assessment that are in the purview of the Planning Board and are indicated to be completed.
 - i. J. Hankin and M. Fick pointed out that the initiatives shown as “completed” are still open as new ideas develop. This year the Planning Board is discussing potential zoning changes that regulate three-family housing the same as two-family rather than multi-family. Also, the Planning Board is considering improvements to the Design Standards defined in the Zoning Bylaw so that the need for Site Plan Review can be reduced for some residential housing projects.
 - ii. G. Reed pointed out that the Housing Needs objective 2.5 addresses transitional housing and is marked as “Not Addressed.” He asked if this is true. Chairperson Davis reported that Construct has the only transitional housing available in town, for a total of 10 individuals. She reported that Construct has a 2 year time limit for transitional residents to find longer-term housing.

- c. Chairperson Davis led a general discussion of several of the items on the Housing Planning Worksheet. The resulting annotated worksheet is included with these minutes.
 - d. Mr. Hankin introduced the topic of changing the STR bylaw to allow renters to offer short term rentals on the same terms as homeowners. He pointed out that renters would be subject to the same restrictions as homeowners in terms of the number of days allowed, residency requirements, and inspections. Allowing renters to take advantage of STR's could provide renters with more funds to rent with. Ms. Davis disagreed with Mr. Hankin, saying that the STR bylaw had been thoroughly vetted and that the town may lose control of who is renting STR's if it is opened to sublessors. Mr. Fick agreed with Mr. Hankin and said that in his opinion allowing STR's by renters might allow more renters to afford high local rents at very little risk. Mr. Fick requested that the issue be retained on the Housing Worksheet. Ms. Davis agreed.
1. NEXT MEETING DATE – Tuesday, October 18 at 1:00 pm.
 2. CITIZENS SPEAK TIME – No citizens requested to speak.
 3. SUBCOMMITTEE'S TIME – No members requested to speak.
 4. MEDIA TIME – No media members requested to speak at this time. Earlier in the meeting Eileen Mooney requested that a copy of the housing Planning Worksheet be sent. It is included with these minutes.
 5. ADJOURNMENT – M. Fick made a motion to adjourn – Chair Davis adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at 2:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Malcolm Fick, Vice Chairperson