

Selectboard & Planning Board Housing Subcommittee Meeting via Zoom
Thursday March 30, 2023

Approved

1. CALL TO ORDER HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING – Chairperson Leigh Davis called to order the Selectboard and Planning Board Housing Subcommittee meeting at 5:30 pm.
2. ROLL CALL - Leigh Davis, “present,” Malcolm Fick, “present,” Jeremy Higa, “present,” Garfield Reed, “present.”
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Mr. Higa moved to approve the draft minutes of February 8, 2023. Mr. Fick seconded. All voted “yes”.
4. SUBCOMMITTEE’S ANNOUNCEMENTS/STATEMENTS
 - a. Mr. Fick reported that the Planning Board reviewed the subcommittee spreadsheet and urged the subcommittee to work on determining which items would depend on Town resources to implement and what justification there might be for a new hire or consultant.
 - b. Mr. Higa said that the Planning Board discussed using CPA funds for affordable housing initiatives. Mr. Fick said there may be grant money or help from BRPC if we can make the case. Mr. Reed asked if such a hire would increase taxes. Mr. Fick said it would depend on the source of funding and on the nature of the work.
 - c. Mr. Reed proposed that a Senior tax deferral be added to the list.
 - d. Ms. Davis reported that the STR bylaw would be going into effect today.
5. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Ms. Davis reviewed the two initiatives that were presented at the joint Selectboard/Planning Board meeting on February 13. She requested comments on the Tax Exemption for Owners of Affordable Year-Round Rental Housing.
 - Mr. Higa expressed concern about the cost of the proposal and concern that it would primarily benefit those who already have affordable rental housing instead of promoting new units.
 - Mr. Reed expressed concern that this proposal might foster resentment from residents who feel left out of the STR program and might be left out of this as well.
 - Ms. Davis said that the town Assessor, Ross Vivori, is working on numbers preparatory to the staff developing a proposal. Mr. Fick suggested that he shares Mr. Higa’s and Mr. Reed’s concerns but that they might be addressed by the staff’s proposal or otherwise be debated to improve any proposal.
 - b. Ms. Davis invited comments on the Transfer Tax proposal.
 - Mr. Reed said that he liked the fact that the town could generate affordable housing funds without increasing real estate taxes.
 - Mr. Higa said he was concerned that an increase in the transfer tax may suppress home sales and prices.
 - c. Mr. Fick introduced the discussion of a housing consultant by presenting a Housing Worksheet annotated with tasks a housing consultant might be expected to lead.
 - Mr. Higa pointed out that many of the initiatives were phrased such that the consultant would be proactive, seeking out opportunities. He suggested that in

several cases, the consultant could also serve as a resource for those considering such things as ADU's and renting. Mr. Fick made changes to several items.

- Mr. Higa also said a consultant could take the lead on a housing symposium.
- Ms. Davis said that the Affordable Housing Trust should be able to run with several items.
- Mr. Fick offered to develop a report detailing the items associated with a consultant.

6. Next meeting date: Tuesday, April 25, 2023, at 5:30 pm

7. Citizens Speak

a. Michelle Luber asked to speak on three issues.

- Ms. Luber questioned whether the "consultant" discussed would be a town employee. She expressed concern that a temporary consultant's work often turns into a full-time position paid for by property taxes.
- Ms. Luber expressed her opposition to the proposed local Transfer Tax. She said that she was personally concerned that such a Transfer Tax would limit sales opportunities and thus reduce the value of her home, which is important to her retirement plans.
- Ms. Luber said she was uncomfortable with members on the subcommittee, who are also on the Community Preservation Committee, recommending actions that the CPC may later be asked to fund.

8. Subcommittee's Time: Members had no further comments.

9. Media Time: No media members requested time.

10. Adjournment: Mr. Higa moved to adjourn. Mr. Fick seconded. Mr. Fick, Mr. Higa and Ms. Davis voted yes. Mr. Reed did not vote due to technical difficulties. Ms. Davis adjourned the meeting at 6:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Malcolm Fick, Vice Chairperson