

Selectboard & Planning Board Housing Subcommittee Meeting via Zoom  
Tuesday, August 9, 2022  
Approved

1. CALL TO ORDER HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING – Acting Vice Chair Leigh Davis called to order the Selectboard and Planning Board Housing Subcommittee meeting at 1:00pm.

2. MEETING

- a. Roll Call - Leigh Davis, “aye,” Jonathan Hankin, “aye,” Garfield Reed, “aye.” Malcolm Fick stated he was not yet sworn in.
- b. L. Davis thanked Pedro Pachano for his efforts and contributions to the Housing Subcommittee and welcomed new member, Malcolm Fick.

3. SUBCOMMITTEE’S ANNOUNCEMENTS/STATEMENTS

- a. J. Hankin stated concerns that under the Short-term Rental Bylaw, by allowing those who own a home to short-term rent, but precluding those who rent a home full-time from short-term renting, runs counter to affordable housing objectives.

4. NEW BUSINESS:

a. SUBCOMMITTEE REORGANIZATION

G. Reed made a motion to nominate L. Davis for Chair; J. Hankin seconded. Roll call vote: L. Davis, “aye,” J. Hankin, “aye,” G. Reed, “aye.” All in favor: 3-0.

- i. It was confirmed M. Fick does not need to be sworn as this is a subcommittee and he is already sworn in as a member of the Planning Board.

J. Hankin made a motion to nominate M. Fick as Vice Chair; G. Reed seconded. Roll call vote: L. Davis, “aye,” M. Fick, “aye,” J. Hankin, “aye,” G. Reed, “aye.” All in favor: 4-0.

- ii. M. Fick stated he would take minutes starting at the next meeting.

b. PRIORITY PLANNING

- i. G. Reed asked for the Subcommittee’s mission to be defined – noting there are multiple committees/groups/NPOs focused on housing.
- ii. L. Davis shared the Subcommittee description: *The Selectboard and Planning Board created a Housing Sub-Committee which is comprised of two Selectboard members and two Planning Board members. This sub-committee will assess policies, programs and suggest actions that allow for the implementation of a wide range of housing types to service our community. Importantly, the Subcommittee focuses on areas where there is an unmet need in housing types vital for the economic health of the town.* She noted that the description has a broader scope - not solely focused on affordable housing so it considers unmet needs and a wide-range of housing types – i.e., ADU, workforce, and affordable housing – and only excludes high-end luxury housing.
- iii. G. Reed asked if all the groups that are dealing with housing could come together to collaborate/carve out roles/focus areas. J. Hankin stated a convening should have specific topic/objective. M. Fick stated the mission/broader discussion could include defining unmet community needs.
- iv. It was acknowledged there are overlapping objectives across groups, but there are niche areas – mostly around scale. The Subcommittee is in a unique position to identify unmet needs, but should stay connected to all groups.

v. The Subcommittee discussed what are unmet needs:

- Workforce housing – defined as those who work in GB, but cannot afford to live here - it is considered to be 80-120% of area median income. This is a broad group including service industry, nurses, teachers, etc. - G. Reed asked for demographics for the workforce population. It was noted that under HUD, workforce is a range – it can be 30-80% range as affordable housing and up to 120%. L. Davis will share salary ranges for GB. M. Fick suggested breaking up workforce into affordable/subsidized and market rate housing – and subcategory of rental and ownership for market rate. It was noted workforce housing impacts economic development. G. Reed stated those who are working in service jobs are in the affordable housing group, not workforce.
- Market rate housing – J. Hankin stated housing prices are very high and if a house is purchased to be a rental it would not be affordable. M. Fick noted that is an unmet need - market rate housing for those who make 80-120% of AMI. It was noted that is more workforce housing. J. Hankin confirmed market rate is the highest. M. Fick stated workforce housing is subsidized in some way – if not, it is market rate. The Subcommittee discussed scenarios for incentives to build/provide affordable rentals. Eileen Mooney stated the Planning Board is discussing incentives at its next meeting. M. Fick stated the Planning Board has no financial say in incentives, but is looking at opportunities outside of zoning bylaws.
- ADUs/Jr ADUs/tiny homes – The Subcommittee discussed that if higher density is allowed for ADUs/multi-family housing - what can be done to promote it. J. Hankin stated there is an effort to educate people about ADUs/small homes as housing options. The Subcommittee agreed people need more information/direction and to identify what the Town can do to help.
- Motels/congregant/multi-family housing - The Subcommittee discussed homelessness in GB – and potential for communal housing like boarding houses, purchasing of hotels/motels or congregant housing with shared facilities. Possible avenues for getting help in the building of ADUs was discussed.

vi. The Subcommittee discussed the importance of integrating diverse people of mixed income in subsidized/unsubsidized housing in neighborhoods.

c. NORTH PLAIN ROAD HOUSING DEVELOPMENT UPDATE / DISCUSSION

Caroline Valli, CEO Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity, presented, stating there would be a community meeting to get feedback on the project/home/development design on August 11 at Housatonic Real Estate at 5:30pm. She stated that open items for the project include who can apply for housing; MassWorks grant funding to cover infrastructure; and redesign of individual units based on housing needs. She shared information on efforts to raise additional funds and other ways to manage costs, but noted the challenges for homeownership presented by increased interest rates – she stated Habitat’s good relationships with funding partners could help. She stated 20 units are planned and expressed hope there would not be a local preference.

- i. G. Reed expressed an inclination towards local residents – C. Valli stated it is a highly likely at least half would be local residents. M. Fick stated this is a good opportunity for housing for people who work in GB, but cannot afford to live here.
- ii. J. Hankin asked about the site plan – C. Valli replied the plan is for houses to face a common green area to encourage gathering/community-building. Buffer zones of greenery and fences have been added at the request of abutters. Whole-house filtration systems are also being considered. She noted the importance of meet PERD requirements.

- iii. L. Davis asked about flexibility around AMI – C. Valli explained Habitat’s preference not to go above 100% - she noted there would be two units at 100%, but the numbers are fluid until there is final permitting and Dept of Housing and Community Development needs to approve the AMI for each unit.
- iv. L. Davis asked about the timeline – C. Valli stated they hoped to hear about the MassWorks grant in late fall and break ground by July 2023. She stated she would provide updates as the project moves along. She also stated she is part of an initiative to bring towns together to collaboratively discuss/address housing issues.

5. SET NEXT MEETING DATE(S) – The Subcommittee agreed to meet next on September 6 at 1:00pm.

6. CITIZEN SPEAK TIME - none

7. SUBCOMMITTEE’S TIME - none

8. MEDIA TIME - none

9. ADJOURNMENT – M. Fick made a motion to adjourn – Chair Davis adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at 2:23pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Ostrow, Recording Clerk