

Town of Richmond Housing Committee Notes

Date: **December 14, 2020**

Time Started: 7:33pm

Time Ended: 9:16pm

Present: **Virginia Clarke (by phone), Carole Furr, Mark Hall, Sarah Heim (Chair), Miranda Lescaze, Zachary Maia, Andrew Mannix, Connie van Eeghen**

Guest: Tim Monty WSBA

Absent: Ruth Miller, Jackie Pichette, Ravi Venkataraman

Quorum is 5; 5 votes to pass any motion

Recorded by MMCTV

1. Welcome and troubleshooting
 - a. Timothy Monty, President of WSBA, is present as guest tonight, interested in housing in Richmond
2. Adjustments to the Agenda
3. Approval of November 9, 2020 meeting minutes
 - a. Miranda proposed and Mark seconded approval of minutes
 - b. Passed unanimously
4. Review of Housing Needs Assessment
 - a. Andrew Mannix, Miranda Lescaze, Mark Hall, and Zachary Maia have been reviewing different sections of the Needs Assessment. Most of these data come from the census, with 5 year estimates included
 - b. Mark: covid-19 impact section has limited data to support it
 - c. Zachary: demographics section, with Richmond population, growth, age distribution, income, poverty status by age, employment categories (e.g. management/consulting), and commuting patterns
 - i. Google sheet will be saved to the shared drive
 - ii. Zachary will recheck the poverty status numbers and correct
 - d. Andrew: housing data, including age of homeowner, annual estimated growth of household age, housing ownership types, age in housing. Some highlights:
 - i. The 60-64 age group has declined in Richmond, whereas it grew in the rest of the county
 - ii. Richmond has a relatively large % of mobile homes and a lower % of condos
 - iii. Richmond housing has a high proportion of ages > 80 years, with an expected life span of 100 years
 - iv. Richmond experienced growth in units to 1990, has since declined
 - v. Richmond housing process have recovered from the recession and are now at historical highs, with a year over year change of 11.6%
 - vi. Median income in Richmond is relatively high
 - vii. Mobile park housing, with a shorter life span, requires more upfront cash to purchase
 - viii. Richmond lacks growth under 34 and over 55, the two groups most likely to invest in condos
 - ix. Andrew will add year to year data into the data set, and a graph to show trend
 - e. Miranda: rental stock
 - i. Rental stock is 21% of the total inventory, less than the county
 - ii. A healthy vacancy rate is 5% or greater; Richmond (which will have a variable rate as a small community) is 5.9% in 2010
 - iii. Rental bedroom mix: 1 bedrooms are 40%; 25% are three bedrooms
 - iv. Rental units also are based on old housing stock; none built since 2009
 - v. Most are single family, detached homes
 - vi. Renters: median income is \$53K, about half of homeowners; income ranges from \$15K to \$100K
 - vii. Two Affordable Housing developments (Richmond Terrace on Thompson; Richmond Housing on Borden St; each with 16 units)
 - viii. Richmond has lower renter costs than Burlington but greater transportation costs
 - ix. Rental rates increased steadily over years but recently leveled off (past 9 years)
 - x. Median rent is highest for 2 bedroom units (larger units may be associated with older ages; protected rents)
 - xi. Affordability: 43% of renters pay more than 30% of their income for housing; a relatively small % of Richmond residents pay more than 50% of their incomes for housing

- f. Mark: Covid-19 data are based on the Household Pulse Survey administered by the feds. This is Vermont data, not county or town data. Allen/Brooks/Minor does a market analysis, rerun in March 2020, about impacts seen in the market due to Covid-19.
 - i. Housing insecurity: upward trend since early September regarding confidence in ability to pay rent (3-6%). Rental housing stimulus package ends in December; if not renewed, these stats will increase.
 - ii. Likelihood of eviction or foreclosure with next 2 months (based on those in the previous response): spike in October but otherwise declining. Vermont has an eviction moratorium at the moment, ending December 2020 but may be extended.
 - iii. Difficulty paying for household expenditures, e.g. water, sewer, heat: downward trend
 - iv. A/B/M survey: apartment values in the county will increase or not change. Urban flight to rural areas is occurring.
- g. Next steps could include:
 - i. Data ends at 2018; could be updated with Town data, e.g. permits, grandlists, projects in the pipeline (DRB members, Ravi, Town Planning Office – Virginia will ask about new/planned projects and year over year housing stock), plans (e.g. Jolina Court), historical reference points to compare our data to (Virginia), visualize on a map (Zachary for the future), Internet access as a marketing point for homes and as part of the demographic section (available through public service – Sarah will research); update the A/B/M survey before finalizing assessment (Mark)
 - ii. Subgroup will assemble document for review; consider downloading data for better graphs (Census estimates as of 2019) – Miranda will review
 - iii. Committee members to review, edit, and ask questions
 - iv. Expected data of Needs Assessment – does it need to coincide with Municipal Planning Grant?
- 5. Discussion on collecting data from people who are not easily able to find housing they want in Town
 - a. Connie reviewed the draft survey, previously distributed
 - b. Tim Monty’s feedback: don’t ask for employer; flow of survey is good; age of housing stock is important as part of survey. Employers, especially larger ones, will be enthusiastic about getting survey out to employees. Encourage employers to provide employees access to computer at work, on the clock. Monty has a survey platform that employers can use. Recommends administering survey early in 2021 during a two week window. Recirculate after a few weeks. Use something like SurveyMonkey. Consider a different survey for business owners.
 - c. Discussion of suggested language surveys. Senior Center individuals can also be surveyed for whether their housing needs are met, right size, walkability. Test out the survey/s before distributing broadly.
 - d. Action: Connie and Virginia will move the employee survey first via Google Doc and coordinate with Ravi about an appropriate platform for distribution (Virginia). Committee members will view the next draft before piloting
- 6. Review of revised Committee goals
 - a. Reviewed proposed draft, amended
 - i. Motion to approve: Carole; Zachary seconded
 - ii. Approved unanimously
- 7. Approval of 2021 Housing Committee Meeting Schedule
 - a. Reviewed proposed schedule
 - i. Motion to approve: Virginia; Miranda seconded
 - ii. Approved unanimously
- 8. Other Business, Correspondence, and Adjournment
 - a. Agenda for next meeting:
 - i. Review of MPG and coordination needed with Needs Assessment – Ravi
 - ii. Review current status of Needs Assessment, including draft of proposed survey of Richmond business employees – Subgroup
 - b. Adjournment
 - i. Motion to adjourn by Zachary, Connie seconded
 - ii. Approved unanimously