

## Housing Committee Meeting Notes – 4/21/22

Committee Attendees: Sarah Heim, Mark Hall, Virginia Clarke, Kristen Hayden-West

Host: Ravi Venkataraman

Adoption of minutes from 3/10/22 meeting

- Sarah made a motion to adopt minutes from last meeting, Kristen seconded. Unanimously adopted.

Update on Zoning for Affordable Housing Study

- Brandy presented to Planning Commission yesterday. She's scheduled to present to Selectboard at May 2, 2022 meeting.
  - o Still able to make minor tweaks to the report, like typos.
  - o Intent is that this is the final draft
- Virginia said that the Planning Commission had some items for discussion. Brandy did a brief presentation. They discussed limited scope in village for mass housing effort. More focus on outlying areas. Discussed the mobile home park and availability of more land. Also highlighted the Farr Farm, which is on the Planning Commission's radar to discuss. Would involve further discussion with the Farris, who aren't totally sold on the idea of housing. Concerned that people will have complaints about living close to the farm. Question of whether there could be other, more dense housing, other than mobile homes in the vicinity of the mobile home park. Owner of the park doesn't currently want water and sewer out there. Brandy wondered whether multi-family housing might be an option. Briefly touched on the area at the end of Railroad Street. Owned by Dan Noyes of the hardware store. Connected to water and sewer. Discussed the Gateway District. There's no large, undeveloped area that's suitable for 15-30 unit affordable housing structure.
- Planning Commission is doing a site visit on Saturday at 3:00 pm. Meet at the Willis Farm to look at the distances, the wetlands, etc. It's a public meeting, so everyone is welcome to attend. But bring good boots! Planning Commission hasn't had a chance to debrief internally.
- Virginia made a summary of tasks for the Housing Committee and Planning Commission, which she'll circulate to the Committee. Virginia would like the Planning Commission to focus on the details of the technical memo to look at how it can adjust towards the goals in its current work. For example, 3-4 unit multi-family housing could be an option. Grappling with the fact that they had community feedback meetings where people opposed multi-family housing, so how should we balance the community's preferences with the need for more housing? Neighbors are ok with moving to quarter acre lots and ADUs. Question of whether to have multiple principal buildings on a lot. A duplex is a single building, but why not just have two free standing separate buildings on a lot? Considering "gentle" changes that wouldn't push the community too far past its comfort zone.

- The Planning Commission discussed some equity considerations in the Gateway, such as the location between the highways. Weigh equity of less housing v. concerns with location. Brandy's input was to make sure we don't JUST have multi-family housing in the Gateway district.
- Jolina Court is currently allowed to have 45 units. Question of whether the town should permit them to add more units. Issues – first floor is required to be commercial, and any development above 45 units should also be commercial. Alternatively, we could drop the commercial requirement. Jolina Court hasn't been able to rent their commercial space, so may make sense to drop. Other issue is parking – could that be shared between the housing and the businesses? Ravi's thought is that if we want more housing, then we should remove the requirement for commercial units on the ground floor.
- Discussed development on Railroad Street, where the new market will be built. Ravi is unsure what other commercial development might go onto the back lots. Not sure what business will go in the old market building, or if it would be retrofitted for housing. Ravi noted that it's difficult to get financing to develop mixed use buildings.
- Kristen – is there any way to require that Jolina Court include some affordable housing? Ravi – Parking could be a potential bargaining chip. If we have more modest sized housing, then there are lower parking requirements/needs. The parking per unit aspect needs to be reevaluated. And the math would need to work out for the affordable housing piece. Virginia – if we take away commercial uses, that also reduces need for parking.
  - o Kristen – who would object to the elimination of the commercial requirement at Jolina Court?
  - o Virginia – Unsure. The Selectboard initially implemented interim zoning. Some members might push for commercial, but their positions might be different now, given how much time has passed since the initial discussions. 15-20 years ago, the Creamery property was entirely commercial. So maybe older residents would prefer that the buildings in that area remain commercial.
  - o Ravi doesn't expect that much opposition to removing the commercial requirement. He sees more opposition to increasing the cap to over 45 for residential units and addition of affordable housing units.
- Planning Commission needs to focus on zoning for the Gateway and the Village. Those are the current priorities. Goal of completing those by the end of the summer. Probably won't take up Jolina Court in the immediate foreseeable future. Might be good to start doing background work. Develop a more pro-housing approach, focus on advocacy, lay some groundwork for increase in housing in Jolina Court.
- Sarah – We may want to focus on advocacy efforts generally around adding more housing over the next few months. Let's brainstorm advocacy options at our next meeting. Could we maybe have a table at the farmer's market? Or at the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration?
- Virginia – does the Housing Committee want to make a list of takeaways from the study of things they'd like to promote at the Planning Commission or Selectboard level? Could include things Brandy listed as Housing Committee projects, but could include other ideas/takeaways. Or perhaps recommend how to prioritize action items.
- For next meeting: brainstorm advocacy efforts for the next few months. Discuss list of priorities/takeaways for the Planning Commission/Selectboard.

## Recruitment Efforts

- Kristen created a blurb to advertise open positions on the Housing Committee.
- Ravi – mixed results for other committees from posting on Front Porch Forum.
- Kristen is happy to post on FPF.
- List Duncan as contact for any applications to join the Housing Committee.
- Virginia’s Statement on Housing Committee Goals
  - o Sarah – received it, but was a little confused about the purpose since we had discussed drafting an “elevator pitch”
  - o OK for Kristen to distribute it as a draft statement, if she’s contacted by anyone who wants more info about the HC
  - o Kristen also encouraged people to reach out to personal contacts who might be interested in joining the HC

#### Meeting Adjourned

- Motion to adjourn – Sarah, seconded by Kirsten. All in favor.