

Town of Richmond Housing Committee Minutes

August 26, 2020

Ravi Venkataraman

Zachary Maia, Miranda Lescaze, Carole Furr, Ruth Miller, Jackie, Sarah Heim, Virginia Clarke

Absent: 2 members and 1 alternate; quorum is 5; 5 votes to pass any motion

Recorded by MMCTV

Ravi Venkataraman called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

1. Welcome
2. Introductions
 - a. Jackie: lived in Richmond 20 years, currently on Baker St; interested because there is a shortage of affordable housing in Richmond; a priority (alternate member)
 - b. Miranda Lescaze: in Richmond 11 years; non-profit Cathedral Square development – working with communities to identify housing needs and plan buildings, funded, and built. Cathedral Square owns and management Richmond Terrace on Thompson Road.
 - c. Ruth Miller: Richmond Village Apartments for 22 years, since it opened; runs the open access station for Richmond since 2008; consumer of affordable housing and knows more is needed
 - d. Carole Furr: Richmond/Jonesville; works for Burlington Housing Authority as an accountant; knows of some tools, such as public grants, to build affordable housing
 - e. Connie van Eeghen: public health research at UVM
 - f. Virginia Clarke: planning commission, long term goal regarding affordable housing which has not been attained; need to understand the drivers and consequences of the issue; need to share definitions of what affordable housing is
 - g. Zachary Maia: in Richmond for under a year; first-hand experience trying to find a rental; regional planner for central VT regional planning commission; on Dugway Rd
 - h. Sarah Heim: in Richmond for under a year; interested in getting involved in community; attorney; pro bono work with tenants and eviction proceedings
3. Election of Chair and Clerk
 - a. Meet monthly or more as needed; Ravi will send out a poll
 - b. Chair: steers meeting, sets agenda, identifies needed materials
 - i. Carol Furr nominated Sarah Heim; she accepted; Miranda seconded; unanimous
 - c. Clerk: Vice-chair, collaborates on agenda, meeting minutes
 - i. Connie van Eeghen self-nominated; Virginia Clarke seconded; unanimous
 - d. Discussion
 - i. Virginia noted that all members were appointed for two years but the charter indicates that terms should be staggered so that the members term out at different times
 1. Ravi: can change the charter as needed (end of two years) or can ask Planning Commission / Selectboard to revise now
 2. Virginia agreed to remind Ravi later to fix
4. Overview of goals and identifying targets
 - a. Charge Short Term Goals:
 - i. Ravi is applying for a municipal planning grant to support inclusionary affordable housing density bonus zoning regulations; more study is needed to determine what would best fit the Town
 1. Application is due Oct 1; Ravi is working with Planning Commission, as approved by the Selectboard: \$22K grant with a \$2K Town match to go Dec 2020 to June 2022 (\$24 total)
 2. Ravi will share the application with members of the Committee (Miranda and Zachary) for review and suggestions
 - ii. Committee will identify data related to demographics, housing stock, and livability
 - iii. Committee will study planning and zoning ordinances
 - b. Charge Long Term Goals:
 - i. Improve availability of affordable housing
 - ii. Advance Smart Growth goals

- iii. Investigate relationship between housing and town issues
- iv. Promote methods to advance renewable energy/energy efficiency
- v. Identify locations for additional housing
- vi. Identify opportunities and secure funding to further study housing needs and revitalize older areas into housing options
- vii. Work with housing partners to bolster livability of the community
- c. Discussion:
 - i. Ruth: Creamery testimony at Selectboard meetings defined affordable housing at a variance with what she and her neighbors considered affordable
 - 1. Miranda: a recent housing webinar identified other local housing committees; a strong recommendation was made to define terms up front
 - 2. Miranda will research definitions on affordable housing
 - ii. Virginia: what sources of information are available: community members, developers
 - 1. Ravi: can arrange presenters/resources for more information; e.g. Eric Hockstra(?) from Essex on the economics of development
 - 2. Ruth: non-profit and for profit developers, e.g. Cathedral Square – Miranda can support; Eric Hockstra for for-profit perspective
 - 3. Connie: what is the process/roadmap for housing committees to proceed
 - a. Ravi: it's an organic process, based on the needs of the town; Ravi has some materials to get us started
 - b. Zachary: the planning grant, if funded, will help with this
 - 4. Virginia can provide an update of what the Planning Commission has learned and accomplished to date, along with helpful tools – especially in the development of Jolina Ct
 - 5. Zachary: ButtonUp – Efficiency VT's program
 - 6. Miranda: is there a previous housing needs assessment
 - a. Ravi: no; just a review of the tools available to do so; needs assessment are not funded as the tools provide everything the committee needs to do so. Ravi can send out examples

5. Other Business

- a. Ruth asked if all were willing to be recorded and for livestreaming. No objections raised.
- b. Ravi will follow up with absent members to orient them.
- c. Time limit for meetings: two hour meetings, max; starting after 7:30 helps households with early bedtimes

6. Next steps

- a. Agenda for next meeting
 - i. Definition of affordable housing: Miranda
 - ii. Review of data available: Ravi
 - iii. Review of tools in toolkit: Ravi
- b. Ravi will send out the charge for the committee, example housing needs assessments, resources from Vermont Planning group, packet for “new committee member”
- c. Ravi will send out two Doodle Poll for September meeting and a regular meeting schedule starting in October

7. Adjourn

- a. Connie made motion; Zachary seconded; unanimous
- b. Meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm.

Recorded by Connie van Eeghen