

Town of Richmond Housing Committee Notes

Date: November 11, 2021

Time Started: 7:35 pm

Time Ended: 9:20 pm

Ravi Venkataraman (Host)

Present: Virginia Clarke, Mark Hall, Sarah Heim (Chair), Connie van Eeghen

Guest: Ian Bender, Kristen Hayden-West

Absent: Miranda Lescaze, Zachary Maia

Quorum is 4; 4 votes to pass any motion

1. Welcome and troubleshooting
 - a. Welcome to our two guests: Kirsten Hayden-West and Ian Bender
2. Approval of October 14, 2021 meeting minutes
 - a. Corrections proposed:
 - i. 4/g/8/viii: 2021 should be 2012; change “current” to “proposed” to read “proposed regulations are wordy...”
 - ii. 5/a: should say “vote for this coming is to approve holding a vote for expansion”
 - b. Moved to accept: Connie van Eeghen
 - c. Seconded: Sarah Helm
 - d. Unanimously passed
3. Adjustments to Agenda
 - a. Ravi: added FY23 UPWP (Unified Planning Work Program) Projects; may continue this item in December
4. Discussion on Gateway District
 - a. Virginia: the Selectboard voted to have a vote on expanding the Water/Sewer district, beyond the Gateway to the town line in that direction, including Exit 11/Mobil Station and the mobile home park. Scheduled for Dec 7, in person only, with masking, spread out chairs, and open windows/doors for ventilation. No obligation to extend, but allows us to extend when/if ready. There will be an extension to the Willis/REAP property.
 - i. Discussion: mobile home park residents may be fearful that an extension would increase their rates. The owner is confident that the current systems are adequate for the properties in the park.
 - ii. Votes on this topic will be limited to the current users of the W/S system and those who might be users. Will be a voice vote or, if requested, a paper ballot.
 - iii. If the Gateway could have more housing, does this Committee want to be an advocate or resource related to this vote?
 1. Our charter allows us to take such actions
 2. We don't know what outreach is currently taking place for W/S residents; will be notified of the schedule for a vote within a defined notice period: Ravi will inquire
 3. The Planning Commission has voiced its support of extension to the Selectboard but does not have an advocacy role
 4. W/S Commission also does not have an advocacy role, but does have an informational role, e.g. more users, lower rates
 5. Two audiences:
 - a. Current users: rates will go down if and when there are line extensions; no change just with expansion
 - b. Potential future users: no change with expansion, just the possibility of future access if needed
 6. We don't have a budget for outreach
 - b. The housing perspective on the Gateway district:
 - i. W/S services are sometimes poor for homes/businesses in the Gateway
 1. Most of the homes are owner occupied and would like to improve these services
 - ii. Zoning changes could allow more multi-family housing or auxiliary housing

- iii. Charrette: a meeting of stakeholders to develop a vision of the future based on different strategies/goals – may help direct future plans
 - iv. Messaging to the current and potential future users has to be carefully and accurately thought out
 - 1. There is support for advocating for the extension by Committee members
 - 2. Voting in favor opens the option for supporting current and future home and business owners
 - 3. Expanding the district first, it is easier to get funding for extending the lines. Expansion provides more financial support, if extension is later desired. Need to check this with Kendall. Ravi confirmed this.
 - 4. Funding is becoming more available in the near future.
 - 5. Need to clearly define the “district” and the “lines” of W/S services
 - 6. A future vote for line extension is conducted only by potential and current users, followed by town wide votes on a bond, if needed to fund the extension. Grant funds do not call for a bond or bond vote. The extension is intended to be paid for by the new users of the system, not the current users of the system. There are no plans to call for any line extensions yet, except for Willis/REAP line.
 - 7. Preparations made for safe, in person voting.
 - v. Virginia will follow up with Kendall on the W/S Commission plans for communication are, as well as a copy of that message.
 - 1. Ravi will discuss with Josh Arneson tomorrow; he and Linda Parent provide support for notices
 - 2. Virginia will work on messaging; Kristen is available to consult on the communication; Sarah will review before signing/sending
 - vi. Committee agree by consensus to submit a letter via Front Porch Forum and/or flyers to homes
 - 1. Connie learned that submission deadlines for the Times Ink! has passed.
5. Update on Zoning for Affordable Housing project
- a. Ravi: Brandy presented to the Planning Commission on Oct 20
 - i. Brandy and Ravi have scheduled the focus group for younger people tomorrow; older people is being scheduled; interviews will be completed before Thanksgiving
 - ii. No public meeting on Nov 18; no new information yet
 - 1. Will schedule in December on proposed recommendations to SB in January
 - iii. Brandy will soon be presenting her full recommendations to the Committee and the Planning Commission
6. Discuss Letter to ARPA Committee
- a. Discussion of letter to ask if the ARPA Committee could include putting funds in a housing trust fund to develop housing in partnerships or a revolving fund to support future homeowners
 - i. Specificity of request is not yet determined
 - ii. Ask for opportunity to give input, based on what is possible/appropriate, and develop recommendations
 - iii. Would need to be operationalized
 - iv. “The Richmond Housing Committee is charged by the Town to alleviate housing-related issues and advance the Housing goals of the Town Plan. We are available to work with the Richmond ARPA Committee on recommendations for using ARPA funds to increase access to housing in Richmond. We offer our support and ask to have a conversation with the ARPA Committee or some of its members to learn how our committee could support your work.”
 - b. The ARPA funds are intended for future infrastructure, not past debt, that will be appropriated by 2024 and spent by 2026
 - c. Review draft language and discuss in December.
7. Other business, correspondence, and adjournment
- a. FY23 UPWP (Unified Planning Work Program) Projects application period starts next Friday and closes January 21 2022; could be used for a charrette or for build out plan related to the Gateway District. There is no external funding available but it is a smaller project that is affordable. Ravi will apply for this program in the next ~month. Needs input from Planning Commission and Housing Committee on projects to pursue.

- i. Gateway District: what are the needs; what are the opportunities; what is the vision of the future?
- ii. Future: big, agricultural, residential district, which covers most of the rest of the Town
 - 1. How will we preserve forest and farmlands while supporting housing accessibility?
- iii. Project would begin July 1 2022; what information will we need in the future? Examples:
 - 1. Development of charrette
 - 2. Affordable housing bonuses
 - 3. Bylaw updates
 - 4. Review of standards
- iv. Continue discussion at December meeting
- b. Next meeting: Thursday, Dec 9 @ 7:30p
- c. Proposed agenda to include: ARPA Committee communication; FY23 UPWP application
 - i. Moved to adjourn: Virginia Clark
 - ii. Seconded: Mark Hall
 - iii. Unanimously passed

Recorded by Connie van Eeghen