

## Town of Richmond Housing Committee Notes

### Housing Committee Meeting

#### Meeting Notes

Date: May 26, 2022

Time Started: 7:34

Time Ended: 9:05

Ravi Venkataraman (Host)

Present: Virginia Clarke, Mark Hall, Sarah Heim (Chair), Connie van Eeghen, Kristen Hayden-West

Guest: (none)

Absent: (none)

Quorum is 4; 4 votes to pass any motion

1. Welcome and troubleshooting
2. Approval of April 21, 2022 meeting minutes
  - a. Moved to accept: Kristen Hayden-West
  - b. Seconded: Sarah Heim
  - c. Unanimously passed
3. Adjustments to Agenda
  - a. Committee membership (and recruitment in future meetings)
4. Committee membership
  - a. Sarah cannot do another 2 years but could serve another six months; she will submit paperwork for reappointment and stay as long as she can
  - b. Mark Hall will also apply for reappointment; Kristen will do so as well (although she too may not be able to complete her term)
  - c. Transportation Committee's policy: outgoing members recruit replacements
5. Brainstorm advocacy efforts
  - a. Opportunities for visibility: 4<sup>th</sup> of July; Farmers' Market; other public event
  - b. Discussion of what our message might be: a specific call to action for the next six months, e.g. a zoning regulation
    - i. Planning Commission is working on family dwellings that have 3-4 units; this is a big step, as the past zoning laws have been protective of single family homes. This includes rental units as well as ownership. Considering introducing in some districts the possibility of 3-4 units in a building. We could work on developing voices to support this step. Could be new construction or conversation of existing structures.
      1. 3-4 unit structures in the "permitted" use.
      2. More than 4 unit (5-8) structures in the "conditional" use. There is plenty of demand, based on Brandy's report.
      3. PUD (Planned Unit Development) takes a long time; the DRB can take a long time. It's possible to allow the Zoning Administrator to permit based on standards, shortening time and reducing cost.
      4. This is an important and valuable change to support; it will take time, a "gentle infill" process. This includes Planning Commission public hearings, Selectboard public hearings, and, if there is controversy, town voting. If not, the Selectboard can vote on changing zoning.
      5. To be completed over the next few months (by the beginning of July); the Planning Commission is focused on two districts: main street commercial/residential and Gateway.
      6. The message needs to be clear and consistent, with a way to follow up for questions/comments
        - a. The Planning Commission is almost ready to state its position and the background (need for housing based on availability)
        - b. Two outlets we can use: Times Ink and FPF; others could include the Farmer's Market and Fourth of July – Sarah will do some research on this

- c. Intro: “we’ve been talking about housing in Richmond, because of the housing shortage here. What’s your opinion about moving to more 3-4 units/building structure?”
      - d. We’d have about a month to do this community education/awareness work once the Planning Commission finalizes its decision. Good to work on the background now.
        - i. Sarah: will find the key bullet points from Brandy’s report as a draft for a handout/poster/flyer. Connie will assist.
    - ii. Jolina Ct has the possibility of 45 additional units of housing; they could support more. Is it more equitable to have more housing, or is the type of housing important, such as diverse selections including condos and multi-unit housing? Buttermilk has presented a proposal to accept the burden of 10 affordable units (but only for ten years) for an additional 45 units. Currently have 14 units; they are planning a second building with 31 units with commercial space on the ground floor (no affordable units planned). If they could have 90 units, they can support (10 or 20) affordable units.
      - 1. Same maximum height: 35 feet (usually 3 stories). Second building will be behind the first.
      - 2. Would need to get rid of commercial space first floor requirement; it’s not getting used.
      - 3. Would need to reduce parking requirement.
      - 4. They have 6 acres, of which 3 are buildable.
      - 5. Planning Commission is studying this proposal for feasibility. There might be other considerations: traffic lights or other traffic mitigation strategies, Act 250
      - 6. Jeff Forward priced out the cost units; they are in the “affordable” range per HUD, although not guaranteed to be affordable (studios (300sf) and one bedroom). This is based on Buttermilk’s price point (80% of AMI [area median income]), not on the incomes of the current residents. Not likely to be affordable for those with the lowest income unless subsidized i.e.g. by Cathedral Square).
      - 7. The change process is similar: Planning Commission public hearings, Selectboard hearings...
        - a. Other routes for change: private contracts with the Town
      - 8. This committee is looking for other voices to help study this proposal
    - iii. Farr Farm: another possibility to be considered. Note that Affordable Housing takes a lot of work; developers find it hard to finance/support.
    - iv. Ag/Res district is another area of focus
6. Discuss list of priorities and takeaways from the Housing Study to the Planning Commission and Selectboard (tabled for next meeting)
7. Other business, correspondence, and adjournment
  - a. Upcoming meeting schedule. Based on the regular meeting schedule, the ensuing four Housing Committee meetings are on:
    - i. June 9<sup>th</sup> (all available)
    - ii. July 14<sup>th</sup> (Connie absent)
    - iii. August 11<sup>th</sup> (all available)
    - iv. September 8<sup>th</sup> (Sarah absent)
  - b. Next meeting: June 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:30
  - c. Proposed agenda to include: Update from Planning Committee; Advocacy plan for the issue of 3-4 units/structure (Sarah, Connie); priorities from Housing Study (tabled from last meeting)
    - i. Moved to adjourn: Connie van Eeghen
    - ii. Seconded: Virginia Clarke
    - iii. Unanimously passed

Recorded by Connie van Eeghen