

Town of Richmond Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: September 27, 2023

Time Started: 5:34pm

Time Ended:6:59p

Keith Osborne, Host, Town Planner

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

Guest: Gary Bressor (Bridge St), John Rankin (Church St)

Absent: none

Quorum is 3; 2-3 votes to pass any motion

1. Welcome and troubleshooting
2. Approval of August 23, 2023 meeting minutes
  - a. Accepted as written
1. Adjustments to Agenda
  - a. John Rankin, Church St, requested that we address the issue of homelessness after attending a recent SB meeting with conversation about parking related to. Agreed to discuss in time for Oct 2 SB meeting.
3. Presentation on increasing housing – Gary Bressor
  - a. Western Gateway Scoping Committee trying to connect village, Park and Ride, and mobile home park
    - i. Rt 2 bike lane, as either part of or next to Rt 2
  - b. Talked with Bard Hill a few months ago and learned that housing developers require connectivity in that area before investing in more housing
  - c. Proposal in 4 sections, based on Emerald Necklace parks near Boston – 7 miles of separate pedestrian and bike/pedestrian trails, with miles of off shoot trails; improved from “waste land” to tourist attraction and commuter alternative; has some sections right on the road. Includes bird safety zones
    - i. Use the north side of west Main street for pathways that are apart from the road; can be a primitive, one tire-width trail. There are old road beds to work with that come out from the end of Tilden Ave near the Catholic cemetery.
    - ii. May have to be on Rt 2 by the Riverview Cemetery; longer term, move pathway to south of Rte 2, with agreement with Farr Farm family
    - iii. Through the Gateway, add 8’ on each side of road (per recent court case) and create a paved path
    - iv. Purchase land behind Mobile station (Mobile owner is willing to talk); move path over the old Thompson hill land (where the retaining wall is); underpass under the I-89 ramp; behind P&R lot; adjacent to Rt 2 under the existing two I-89 overpasses; through the currently inaccessible park, under the last I-89 ramp, around quarry stone property to entrance to mobile home park
  - d. Money may be available to help connections with underserved areas of the town; may help convince VTrans
  - e. Western Gateway project is moving forward: proposal for feasibility study (associated with Pinch Point study). Conservation Commission is supportive. Not able to present to ARPA.
    - i. Next step: decision over which version (Gary’s or a simpler one) to support
    - ii. Invited to present to Planning Commission
    - iii. Consider whether VTrans would take on creation of new underpasses related to I-89 ramps
    - iv. Call it the “Emerald Trail” (and other green ideas!)
    - v. Letter of support to Transportation Committee and SB, tying in to mission of this committee – mock up reviewed for next housing Committee meeting
4. Review feedback from Richmond Selectboard on Affordable Housing Presentation
  - a. SB asked for a proposal: what to do and data on Richmond’s affordability
    - i. They understand that there are no quick fixes
    - ii. We are free to pursue property development opportunities
    - iii. We may get into the business of building up the infrastructure to attract more development (e.g. Bressor’s plan)
    - iv. Outreach and support of good ideas in development

**Commented [VC1]:** Connie, I think that a motion will pass on a majority vote of those members present, which in our case would be 2

**Commented [CvE2R1]:** I thought we were technically a committee of five, so that it takes all 3 of us in agreement to pass.

Keith, can you advise and correct as needed?

- v. Development of housing fund, supported by Town of Richmond, e.g. for senior (rather than affordable) housing
  - b. Homeless in Richmond:
    - i. The issue of affordable housing is now affecting Richmond residents directly
    - ii. Discussion expected at next SB meeting, presented as a “parking” issue
    - iii. Are shelters viable in small villages? We need more information.
    - iv. Connie to follow up with Chief Cambridge on the extent of the issue
- 5. Ideas for membership recruitment
  - a. Connie asked if we could meet in the morning or early afternoon to help attract members – not at this time
  - b. To be continued
- 6. Act 47 discussion – for next time
- 7. Other business, correspondence, and adjournment
  - a. Next meeting: October 25 at 5:30
  - b. Proposed agenda to include: Draft letter of support to Transportation Committee and SB for Bressor Proposal; Follow up on homeless sheltering concern; Recruitment; Act 47 discussion; next steps on SB request for a proposal
  - c. Agreed to adjourn at: 6:59p

Recorded by Connie van Eeghen