

Town of Richmond Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: November 7, 2023

Time Started: 5:33p

Time Ended: 7:00p

Keith Osborne, Host, Town Planner and Zoning

Present: Virginia Clarke (Planning Commission), Mark Hall (Chair and rental property owner, with project management background), Connie van Eeghen (Clerk and public health administration)

Guest: John Rankin (Parking Advisory Committee members for Homeless Sheltering Concern item); Maggie O'Grady (interested in learning more about the Housing Committee; is a renter in Richmond and has family here); June Heston (interested in Homeless Sheltering Concern)

Absent: none

Committee is approved at 5 members, 2 alternates (5/16/22); quorum is 3

1. Welcome and troubleshooting
2. Adjustments to Agenda - none
3. Approval of September 27, 2023 meeting minutes
 - a. Accepted as written
4. Recruitment - Further ideas to increase membership
 - a. Importance of broad representation from Richmond's community
 - b. 5:30p meeting times could work if limited to 7p; Rachel L is interested and Connie will follow up
 - c. 4th Wednesday of each month, except this December
 - d. Matt Parisi (builder) is interested and Virginia will follow up with him
 - e. If we as a committee can develop more concrete ideas of what we will do, it may be easier to recruit and support those projects
 - f. Keith will put link on our webpage to the application and Connie to post to FPF
5. Homeless Sheltering Concern- update (10 Min)
 - a. Selectboard (SB) discussion based on community concern
 - b. Chief Cambridge recommends watching and paying attention; each case is different and calls for a different kind of solution. Agrees that this is part of the work of the Richmond PD.
 - c. June Heston reported on a specific situation over the past summer near Southview
 - i. Consider limiting overnight parking to designated areas in the Town Center, with more people around and better access to restrooms
 - d. Chuck Gilroy/Parking Advisory Committee reported that a solution such as June's suggestion is one possibility; another is opening all recreational parking for overnight use (Overrocker Park); still considering what to recommend to SB
 - e. John Rankin/PAC noted that this is a social issue, not a recreational issue. As a resident of the Town, would support a compassionate solution and not rushing.
 - i. June: it is a lower level problem until one feels unsafe, which has happened to her once before
 - f. Virginia: Perhaps the Housing Committee was asked to consider a systemic housing solution; this is not what appears to be needed. Agreed that this is a social services issue.
 - g. Chuck: PAC is focused on recreational parking, which is limited in Richmond; there are a lot of non-recreational places to park. Personally, agrees with the suggestion of a centralized, permitted parking for those needing overnight parking.
 - h. John: PAC will talk more and will invite Housing Committee to report back to SB
6. Jericho Affordable Housing Presentation Discussion
 - a. Mark summarized the Oct 4 presentation to the Planning Commission: Jericho residents shared a thoughtful plan on how to incentivize affordable housing with a goal of affordable units, ADUs, senior housing. Working on outreach, advocacy, and thinking about a housing fund, possibly supported across communities as a common goal. Incentives not so far picked up by developers.
 - i. We have updated our charge but have not selected a project to focus on

- b. Connie proposed reconsidering the Browns Court property – a portion of it – as a potential affordable housing site, if supported with expert advise and understanding of maintaining essential, important features of the property.
 - i. Keith: yes, it is possible to study this project (and Jolina Court) with grant funding
 - ii. Virginia: Brandy Saxton cost us \$20K for an in-depth study including outreach and focus groups
 - iii. Keith: CCRCP can also support this
 - iv. Virginia: would need a discussion with the affordable housing providers (Champlain Housing Trust, Cathedral Square, EverNorth); need to identify who could do a study
 - 1. Mark: will contact Brandy Saxton
 - 2. Keith: will contact CCRCP
 - v. Draft of a proposal to explore use of land for affordable housing in an existing recreational area should include
 - 1. Assessment of land use for housing, land reserved for amenities, traffic volume, parking... with various technical constraints/requirements including:
 - a. Engineering
 - b. Ecological
 - c. Storm water...
 - 2. Conversations with stakeholders (include Housing Committee members in this listening work) and identification of the needs and features that are important to retain or improve:
 - a. Neighbors
 - b. Recreation Committee
 - c. Affordable housing providers
 - 3. Goal: Understand the potential use of the Browns Court property for multiple uses and make a proposal for next steps to Selectboard to explore
 - 4. If this exploration shows possibilities, then consider, in phases, feasibility, scoping, design, and construction
 - vi. Maggie: what are the reasons for neighborhood resistance? What would be the steps in identifying the metrics that evaluate whether something is OK or not?
- c. Virginia: Jericho Housing Committee wanted a resolution from the SB. We skipped that step and moved to action, e.g. changing zoning (helped by Act 47), but both towns have similar work to do.
 - i. Connie: the Town voted on a resolution declaring its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in November 2021. This resolution promotes positive action on affordable housing: <https://vtdigger.org/2021/11/04/richmond-board-adds-equity-and-inclusion-goals-to-town-mission-statement/>

7. Act 47 Discussion (15 Min) - postponed

8. Other business, correspondence, and adjournment

- a. Future meetings in 2024: 4th Wed of each month, 5:30 – 7:00 (hard stop), starting Jan 24, 2024
- b. Next meeting: Wednesday, Dec 13, 2023 5:30 – 7:00 by Zoom
- c. Proposed agenda to include: Recruitment, Browns Court, Jolina Court, Act 47
- d. Agreed to adjourn at: 7:00p

Recorded by Connie van Eeghen