

Town of Richmond Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: February 17, 2026

Time Started: 12:01 pm

Time Ended: 1:36pm

Present: Virginia Clarke, Andrew Mannix (Chair, Connie van Eeghen

Guest: Bryce Gilmer, currently serving on the Richmond Land Trust board and an owner of the real estate firm Vermont Real Estate Company

Absent: Nick Blanchet, Mairead O'Reilly

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

Summary supported by AI: The meeting discussed the challenges and opportunities related to Richmond's water and sewer infrastructure as related to future housing development. Key points included the need for transparent communication and collaboration with the Water Sewer Commission, the potential for expanding infrastructure to support growth, and the impact of current systems on housing availability. The committee also explored the CHIP program, which could provide funding for housing infrastructure projects, and emphasized the importance of creating a community consensus on housing needs. Short-term rental regulations were deemed a lower priority, with low estimates of active listings in town. The committee agreed to attend quarterly Water Sewer Commission meetings and to explore funding opportunities for infrastructure expansion. The meeting discussed the extension of water and sewer lines to a mobile home park, aligning with the CHIP project's future housing development plans. The Planning Commission is working on revising zoning and subdivision regulations, including the village commercial district and density bonus programs, considering research on the relationship of fire insurance rates and building heights, and the need for user-friendly zoning regulations. Recruitment of new members was mentioned, with a guest attendee considering making an application for membership. The next meeting is scheduled for March 17 at noon.

1. Welcome and troubleshooting (0:00:00)
2. Adjustments to Agenda – (0:00:01)
3. Approval of the January 15, 2026 meeting minutes (0:00:45)
 - a. Accepted as written
4. Water/Sewer Commission update: Andrew (0:02:00)
 - a. Goal is to be part of the W&S conversation
 - b. The pump replacement may not be part of our work, but there are opportunities for growth within the existing district and lines
 - i. Current plan is to maintain the same or larger pump capability, potentially up to an addition 100 units
 - c. If the Farr Farm is part of the developable land, we might be able to assist the process
 - d. There will be a bond vote in Nov 2026 or Mar 2027, which the Town will be a co-signer for (and therefore will include all Richmond voters)
 - e. Key element: Finding a logical argument to broaden the discussion to reflect future needs across
 - f. Bryce: the W/S system is of interest to the RLT, for example, RLT owns the land next to the REAP farm
 - i. Interest in extending the system to the mobile home park
 - ii. Important to identify the developable parcels
 - iii. Andrew: each year, there are more non-producing wells, not clustered together (Southview, Overlook, Westall, Joan, Hidden Pines...) and water quality is declining due to excess salt from roads; this will become a major problem for our community.
 1. We have a public responsibility to watch over water system
 - g. Action items:
 - i. Andrew will learn more about W/S systems in other villages our size to see what other alternatives exist by April 2026
 - ii. W/S Committee: Andrew and perhaps Mairead will attend meetings on quarterly basis; Connie will be back up if both are unable to attend; Connie will email Morgan Wolaver
5. CHIP Webinars: Connie (0:36:00)

- a. Connie: overview of three CHIP-related webinars, which may provide a no-cost solution for tax-payers that can add infrastructure to support additional housing
 - b. Need for a town-wide vision
 - i. Start with the grass roots: those who would benefit from expanded, dependable water system
 - ii. FLU mapping system is a response to Act 250 for Tier 1a or 1b parcels to allow increased housing
 - iii. Colchester's expansion is based on a town-wide bond, with a grand plan to expand the entire system due to water quality problems, which is impacting the property values of home owners. It took 30 years to accomplish this, influenced by the change in lake water quality.
 - c. Action:
 - i. Connie to contact Bonnie about applicability to flood zones; Tier 1a or 1b
 - ii. Long term goal: how to craft the persuasive arguments – to be continued
6. Short-term Rentals: Virginia (1:05:00)
- a. Planning Commission decided not to keep this item on their short list and asked Housing Committee to consider whether there should be regulations regarding short term rentals (e.g. AirBNB) – is it a problem? Might it be in the future?
 - i. How many homes are engaged in short term rentals, winter vs summer
 - ii. How are regulations faring in other towns (law suits... what is legal re: regulations)
 - b. Data bases exist but cost money from third party providers to provide objective results and well-supported analysis. Other kinds of questions are also relevant: type of dwelling (entire home or ADU?). Andrew's estimate is 30-40 units. Bryce estimated that the AirBNB market is over-saturated.
 - c. Housing committee members declined to add this item to their priority list.
7. Prioritize strategic plan items (1:16:00)
- a. Planning sheet:
 - b. https://richmondvt-my.sharepoint.com/:x:/r/personal/koborne_richmondvt_gov/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B7BCE5C7-9171-4C3E-98E6-A1062A4FCE72%7D&file=Planning%20Document-%20Strategic%20Housing%20Plan%20Recommendations.xlsx&action=default&mobileredirect=true
 - i. Items 1 and 2 are high priority and covered in the above first two topics agenda items
 - ii. The remaining items, 3-10, are helpful but need research on how to include or how to identify restrictions, costs, etc. Housing Committee will participate in the Planning Commission's work on these items. Andrew may be able to assist with the item related to building height.
 - c. Committee members agreed that they would focus on two items for 2026:
 - i. Utilize the recently passed Community and Housing Infrastructure Program2 (CHIP) to unlock financial support for improvements such as water, sewer, roads, and stormwater systems to support the growth of all housing types.
 - ii. Work with the Water and Sewer Commission to review and update the existing water and sewer bylaws to increase the likelihood of district expansion.
 - iii. Other items may be added as Planning Commission requests the Housing Committee's assistance
8. Recruitment (1:27:00)
- a. Bryce will consider joining as a committee member
 - b. Andrew and Connie will continue to work on the Committee for the next year
9. Other business, correspondence, and adjournment (1:30:00)
- a. Microsoft links not working for Andrew, Virginia; Connie will send refreshed links.
 - b. Next meeting: Tuesday, March 17 at noon
 - c. Proposed agenda to include: Andrew - update on W/S financing in other towns; Virginia - Planning Commission update; Connie - VLCT update on CHIP questions
10. Adjournment: Agreed to adjourn at 1:36pm

Recorded by Connie van Eeghen