

Town of Richmond Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: March 17, 2026

Time Started: 12:08pm

Time Ended: 1:30pm

Present: Virginia Clarke, Andrew Mannix (Chair), Mairead O'Reilly (and Oisin), Connie van Eeghen

Guest:

Absent: Nick Blanchet

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

AI Summary:

The Housing Committee discussed the future meeting with the Water/Sewer Commission, identifying key goals. They reviewed an update on the CHIP program and a summary of current Planning Commission activities. They reviewed the strategic plan, raising attention to items 7 and 8 to plan the creation of a Housing Trust Fund and to partner with housing organizations like Habitat for Humanity. They also addressed the need for stormwater regulations, noting the high costs and potential impact on housing development. The committee considered tracking short-term rentals and the challenges of recruiting new members. They proposed shortening meeting times and focusing on specific projects to make the committee more efficient and productive. The committee also discussed the importance of community outreach in the context of its specific projects. A trial of one-hour meetings was agreed upon, with the next meeting scheduled for April 16 from 12 to 1 PM by Zoom. Key agenda items will include a water and sewer update from Andrew and Mairead, and a brief update on CHIP program. The meeting concluded at 1:30 PM.

1. Welcome and troubleshooting (0:00:00)
2. Adjustments to Agenda (0:01:00) – no changes
3. Approval of the February 17, 2026 meeting minutes (0:03:00)
 - a. Accepted as written
4. General Updates and Discussion – Committee
 - a. Updates on Water Sewer Commission; W/S financing in other towns; prep for W&S meeting on Mon, April 6 at 5:30p (Andrew) (0:05:00)
 - i. Will get other town's (e.g., Essex Junction) Town Manager's insights on pros and cons about W/S system expansion learned over the years
 - ii. Mairead is not able to go to those evening meetings but can help support at other times
 1. She is willing to review the Richmond ordinances related to W/S expansion; she will do this for the Committee's next meeting
 2. Consider getting history from Bard Hill or David Sander (Selectboard members)
 3. Goals:
 - a. What are the mechanisms for changing rules around expansion (related to both the W/S Commission and the voters' actions)?
 - b. Could the Town expand the W/S district as part of supporting opportunities for increased/improved housing; how do decisions about the W/S district's ordinances get made?
 - c. How would change be accomplished – is there a possible connection with CHIP funding?
 - iii. Andrew will attend Richmond's W&S meeting on Monday, April 6
 - iv. Virginia: Richmond needs to update its map related to the water district based on a voting outcome from several years ago
 1. To expand the district: no cost to expansion; already includes the Gateway
 2. To extend the lines: users must vote to approve
 3. To change mechanisms for extending lines: we don't know how this decision is made
 - b. CHIP webinars (Connie; Virginia): Follow up from Bonnie Waninger (VLCT); Goal: how to craft persuasive engagement (00:17:00)

- i. Flood zone: does the Town Center provide an opportunity for new housing? Could it be turned into 40-50 apartments that someone else can own: mixed use. Could also be used by the Town. Could CHIP be used to re-develop a building that is in the flood plain? A private/public project. Connie will ask Bonnie for more information.
 - ii. Related VT Digger article: <https://vtdigger.org/2026/03/06/gabe-lajeunesse-update-chip-to-build-flood-ready-housing/>
 - iii. Send Andrew the St. Albans contact; resend Virginia the links to the CHIP seminars.
 - c. Planning Commission (PC) Update (Virginia) (0:27:00)
 - i. New storm water regulations is the current priority: we don't have these regulations and, with greater housing density, expect that we will have more impervious surfaces and therefore more stormwater. The Town's current language is not particularly usable for adding stormwater regulations .
 - ii. What is our persuasive argument related to stormwater regulations? It may add to development costs but will be needed due to infill housing and greater density; could add around \$40K per lot per Andrew's experience. PC is looking at regulations for:
 - 1. Erosion control during construction
 - 2. Stormwater management long-term after construction is completed
 - iii. PC is learning what other towns (e.g., Huntington) have for such regulations. Richmond currently has no standards in the Zoning regulations, for stormwater
 - 1. PC will find out what the Highway Department has for stormwater infrastructure
 - 2. What should the definition of stormwater be related to length/intensity of precipitation?
 - 3. Current resource: "low-risk handbook" related to erosion and disturbed soil
 - iv. What will the Town do for its development projects, e.g., Browns Court – how will it model this use of stormwater management? How will it support stormwater infrastructure development?
 - v. PC is also working on its list of improvements identified in the newly approved Town Plan, including stormwater and other issues.
 - d. Confirm priority strategic plan items: items 1 and 2; [Planning Doc for Housing SP](#) (0:43:00)
 - i. Mairead suggested that we also work to address items 7 (Create a Housing Trust Fund) and 8 (Partner with housing organizations) in our plan. She is willing to take on these two projects one at a time.
 - 1. Item 8 comments:
 - a. There is background to Champlain Housing Trust/Borden St project we need to understand
 - b. Habitat has agents to work with development opportunities; Andrew will send Mairead contact information: Karin Ericson with KW Vermont and The Malley Group non-exclusive agent for Habitat. 802-363-3632 and karin@kw.com
 - 2. Item 7 comment:
 - a. Mairead will work on creating a plan for how to set up a Housing Trust Fund
 - ii. Not on our strategic plan: short term rentals (STRs); Mairead sought information on how we might track the number of STRs in our community based on their impact in other VT communities.
 - 1. Planning Commission decided it will not address this issue at this time.
 - 2. Our guest from last week estimated 5-10 AirBNB units in Richmond currently. Many are ADUs on landowner property; some rentals are short term while homeowners are away for extended (e.g., 4 month) periods. Several AirBNB rental units are on the market due to retrenchment.
 - 3. There are 3rd party platforms (e.g. AirDNA) are available; State of VT requires rentals to be registered which is not enforced.
 - 4. The Committee agreed to add this item to its Strategic Planning list for future consideration.
5. Recruitment (1:01:00)

- a. Continue to send past attendees invitations to attend
 - b. Personal contacts are relatively productive – continue these
 - c. Our meetings can adjust to the time needed: one hour meetings are possible
 - d. The Housing Committee is a set of long term projects and doing projects in modular pieces may be the most viable way to support them
6. Other business, correspondence, and adjournment (1:15:00)
 - a. One hour meetings as a trial for next meeting
 - b. Next meeting: Thursday, April 16, 12-1p by Zoom
 - c. Proposed agenda to include: Water/Sewer (Andrew/Mairead), CHIP (Connie-brief update)
7. Adjournment: Agreed to adjourn at: 1:30 (1:21:00)

Recorded by Connie van Eeghen