

Town of Richmond Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: January 12, 2023

Time Started: 7:33p

Time Ended: 8:59

Duncan Wardwell (Host – not present)

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

Guest: Patty Brushett, Gina Prader (both are members of the public and Richmond residents), Manu Chopra (from Alexandria VA, who left around 7:50), Cecilia Danks from Richmond arrived around 7:55

Absent: None

Quorum is 3; 3 votes to pass any motion

1. Welcome and troubleshooting (7:33)
2. Approval of December 14 2022 meeting minutes (7:34)
 - a. Accepted as written (7:35)
3. Adjustments to Agenda (7:35)
 - a. Public comments (7:36)
 - i. Patty: as we think about portable housing, is Browns Court (4 acres) property be a possible location as a Housing Trust building, or other arrangement? It would be supported by water/sewer and other public services.
 1. Virginia: we are also considering Jolina Court and Farr Farm property for either housing or affordable housing. We will discuss more fully later in the agenda. All three properties would take considerable work but we can discuss this fully.
4. Background Review (7:41)
 - a. Jolina Court
 - i. More housing is possible: 45 units on 6 acres, with half in flood plain, so only 3 acres are usable
 1. They have permission to build 45 units in 2 buildings. They have submitted an incomplete application for the 2nd building, which is pending more information, for an additional 31 units. The Selectboard would have to approve additional units beyond the first 45, along with Act 250 paperwork. The Developer has not sought more units beyond the 31.
 - ii. Those 31 units that could added as affordable housing
 - iii. The ground floor is reserved as retail space in keeping with the need of 15 years ago; this could be changed
 - iv. Should we alter the plan to allow more space for housing, with an upper limit of 90 units per our previous Town Planner (Ravi)
 1. Should the first floor of a future building be reserved for retail or open to housing?
 2. Should units be increased?
 3. What amenities would be needed?
 4. The developer, Buttermilk, is not interested in affordable housing; hard for Richmond to make it more enticing. 31 units is not a large enough project to support a percentage as “affordable.”
 - v. Ravi previously approached Buttermilk to explore increasing beyond the 31 additional units; those talks are now on hold.
 - vi. Cecilia Danks: HR 720/Act 180 passed last year for families with adult children with disabilities; Richmond might be a community for such an option
 1. Virginia: “supported housing” is a new category of use to be approved for the Village, which is a walkable area (there being no public transport)
 - b. Farr Parcel: beyond Round Church, half in flood plain and 30 acres above flood plain, at end of water line, for mixed use or housing
 - i. Would require a conversation with the Farr Family. To date, want to keep it as a farm and open to dairy, which doesn’t mix well with residences due to noise and smell (as opposed to Self-Storage, which does). Could be supported with Master Planning Efforts and a grant to support this work.
 - ii. Will require one on one outreach to Farr Family by a dedicated individual/s.

- c. Short term rentals in Richmond
 - i. Short term rentals reduce the available stock for long term rentals
 - ii. Not much data on this topic or its effects
 - iii. Identified as a topic of concern in many communities in the U.S.
 - d. The PC has worked on planning revisions and outreach to the neighborhoods, which are protective about increased density. Although the PC turned to the Village and Gateway to consider changes, other districts are still possibilities. The goal is to gradually increase the density of housing.
 - e. The Housing Committee will consider how it can help one or more of these possibilities move forward.
 - f. In the past, Miranda Lescaze (Champlain Housing Trust) helped us learn about affordable housing in Richmond; Molly Dugan is also a good resource to answer questions like:
 - i. What is needed to make it work, based on available land and who owns it
 - ii. What does the Town need to consider and who decides
 - iii. What are the costs and how can it provide a sufficient return
 - g. Possible next steps
 - i. What is the history of the Browns Ct property: Virginia will ask Josh Arneson about history and process
5. Update from the Planning Commission (8:39)
 - a. Two proposals: Village residential and Gateway have been reviewed by attorney, to be discussed at PC committee next Wednesday. Multi-family housing and other issues seem to raise conversations but not resistance. Should be approved by January or February and move to Selectboard public hearing process.
 - b. Afterwards, PC will select next project to work on.
 6. Recruiting Update (8:42)
 - a. Following up previous conversation, no candidates identified yet
 - b. Open discussion about the time requirements and work of the committee
 - c. We will continue to recruit
 7. Physical Meeting Room: February 9, 2023 (8:51)
 - a. Connie to cover February
 - b. Mark will be at Town in March 9
 - c. Virginia will be at Town Center April 13
 - d. Move meeting time to start at 7p
 8. Other business, correspondence, and adjournment (8:56)
 - a. CCRP Regional Housing Convening on Jan 30 from 6p-8p – Virginia to get more information and share
 - b. Next meeting: Thursday, February 9, 2023
 - c. Proposed agenda to include:
 - i. Report back from Virginia on Richmond properties
 - ii. Update from Planning Commission
 - iii. Future Housing Committee Topics
 - d. Agreed to adjourn at: 8:59

Recorded by Connie van Eeghen