

City of Portsmouth
Housing Blue Ribbon Committee
Conference Room A*
MEETING MINUTES
January 16, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

I. Roll Call

Meeting Called to Order by Planning Manager Peter Stith at 5:30p.m.

Attending: Councilor Beth Moreau, School Board representative Byron Matto, Erik Anderson, Tracy Kozak, Mary Loane, Dagan Migirditch, John O’Leary, Jennifer Stebbins Thomas, City Manager Karen Conard, Planning and Sustainability Director Peter Britz, Planning Manager Peter Stith and Housing Navigator Howard Snyder Absent: Megan Corsetti, Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelley, Councilor John Tabor

II. Housing Opportunity Planning 2.0 Grant (HOP 2.0) Update

The signed contract is with NH Housing offering a springboard to zoning changes. PHA outreach to being in a couple of weeks. Committee asked if they might meet with PHA before that outreach.

III. Workforce Housing Trust Fund Update

Peter Britz reported discussion with the chair of the Trustees of the Trust Fund to understand how the Trust will operate and to have it in place to receive and raise funds, including the agreed settlement with Kane on the McIntyre Project. Uses could include purchasing land, rental assistance, developer assistance for building below-market-rate housing. Expect document back from Trustees in a couple of weeks. In future the Committee would make recommendations on use to the Trustees then, if they approve, the request would go to City Council for a vote. The role of the Trustees is to oversee disbursement to ensure the process is followed.

Guidelines seem wide open – if the Trust offered low income loans, the vehicle to protect repayment would operate like the First Time Buyer program where the City holds a second mortgage. Committee can clarify the rules.

Voted to suspend the rules to bring forward Public Comment.

Public Comment:

John. Directed to Agenda and Meeting Packet on City website to follow Committee Work.

Petra Huda: “In lieu of” should determine a policy that gets city to workforce housing instead of options like community space. Cost-benefit suggests developers would increase the market rate housing and not increase affordable housing.

IV. Payment in Lieu

Planning statistics: 93% market rate, 7% affordable units but that includes the 44 units at 1035 Lafayette that are currently held up. So reality is 96% market rate and 4% affordable. There's a history of developer incentives not getting where we want to go on affordable housing. Committee asked if staff could provide more data on the proportions: how many units have been developed, percentage of workforce units, to provide a baseline for the Committee's first year addressing its mission to create more workforce housing. There's a lag time between the rules and developers realizing the option is available.

'In lieu of' zoning amendment applies only to the GNOD situation that also involves a land transfer. Does not apply elsewhere unless the GNOD were expanded. To include in the City's fee schedule there must be an established process – the size and capacity of the land and eligible use for affordable housing – not economically viable elsewhere.

Question about the City financing housing. The purpose of the Trust is not lending to generate income, it's to create more housing.

Questions about the basis for calculating the in lieu of fee – construction cost at market rate vs. income restricted unit or purchase cost? Motion to table the discussion so staff can address concerns, explain RKG chart. There's no pending deadline for the City Council to approve the in lieu of fee. Committee suggested inviting some developers to the next meeting for 'real world' insights.

V. City Owned Properties

Committee has completed site walks on four parcels. Need to prioritize them to get housing built.

Adjournment:

John O'Leary motion to
adjourn.

Megan Corsetti: Second

Called to vote by Co-Chair Assistant

Mayor Kelley In favor: All.

Opposed: None.

Motion approved

unanimously. Adjournment

at 6:50 p.m.