



MEETING MINUTES

City of Portsmouth Housing Blue Ribbon Committee Conference Room A at City Hall

October 3rd 2024
5:30 p.m.

I. Roll Call

Meeting Called to Order by Co-Chair Kelly at 5:30 p.m.

Co-Chair Kelly calls roll call:

Attending: Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelly, Councilor John Tabor, Councilor Beth Moreau, School Board Representative Byron Matto, Tracey Kozak, Mary Loane, John O'Leary, Jennifer Stebbins Thomas, Dagan Migirditch. City Staff: Housing Navigator Howard Snyder, Planning and Sustainability Director Peter Britz, Planning Manager Peter Stith Absent: City Manager Karen Conard, Erik Anderson, Megan Corsetti, Andrew Samonas..

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes for the following dates were reviewed and discussed:

1. June 13, 2024: Approved unanimously after a motion by John O'Leary and seconded by Councilor Beth Moreau.
2. June 27, 2024: Approved without amendments after a motion by City Councilor Moreau and seconded by Tracey Kozak.
3. July 18, 2024: Approved with corrections regarding Joanna Kelley's attendance, as she was incorrectly marked absent while actively participating.

Councilor Tabor: Motion to approve amendments.

Byron Matto: Second.

Joanne Kelly: Calls vote.

All in favor: All.

Opposed: None.

Motion passed unanimously.



III. Working Group Updates

1. Zoning Working Group: Updates presented include ongoing evaluation of zoning requirements, specifically concerning housing types that could be introduced in Portsmouth to increase affordability. Discussions included review of Commerce Way.

JT: Notes group will do so; should review current parking study.

2. Parking and Transportation Working Group: Updates include notification that the group had not met yet but was planning to meet this week or next.
3. Financial Working Group: Updates included discussions on proposed frameworks and potential financial structures for a Workforce Housing Trust. These items involved recommendations for homebuyer assistance programs and the possibility of a revolving loan fund. Other focus areas include investigating tax incentives such as TIFs. Members of this group were confirmed as Jennifer Stebbins Thomas, Megan Corsetti, Byron Matto, Dagan Migirditch, and Co-Chair Tabor.

JT: Notes groups discussions with Clay Adams of the non-profit Upper Valley Loan Fund (UVLF) and their use of \$10million at 1.5% loan rate for workforce housing.

JST: Mentions Ever North and how management raised funds with outreach to local and regional employers.

IV. Initial Discussions on Programming and Funds for Workforce Housing Trust

1. Review of Workforce Housing Trusts in Other Municipalities:

HS: Outlines case studies of workforce housing trusts from various New Hampshire and Massachusetts municipalities. Details organizational structures and funding mechanisms.

Committee members discuss 1993 Portsmouth Housing Endowment Fund Trust (PHEFT). Request clarifications on structure of endowment fund, how well known it is and who qualifies. Members contemplate and ask how the City Council may be able to repurpose the goals and funds of the trust.

JK: Notes second ordinance relating to the PHTF allows users to shop for rates beyond Citizens Bank.

JL: Notes Trustees role is to invest and manage funds.

Committee members request staff to work with legal and gain an understanding of the funds in terms of ability to modify and the process required.

2. Potential Programming of a Workforce Housing Trust in Portsmouth:



Committee members discuss 1993 Portsmouth Housing Endowment Fund Trust (PHEFT). Request clarifications on structure of endowment fund, how well know it is and who qualifies. Members contemplate and ask how the City Council may be able to repurpose the goals and funds of the trust.

Discussion included creating a new Portsmouth Workforce Housing Trust or amending the existing Portsmouth Workforce Housing Trust Fund established in 2009 to support the HBRC's aim to support development of affordable units. Members debated on the concept of using city-owned properties for affordable housing development and potential strategies for encouraging developers to build affordable units through financial incentives or density bonuses.

Members discussed what other City programs may be involved in housing besides PHA. A request was made for staff to inquire about the City's welfare department and their involvement with housing.

3. Potential Uses of Workforce Housing Trust Fund:

Members discussed different uses for a potential housing fund. Items considered were land acquisition to create affordable housing units, financial assistance to lower-income households, and grants or low-interest loans for developers to include affordable units in new developments. Consideration was given to how the trust could help address increasing "housing cost burdens" for both renters and owners in Portsmouth.

V. Public Comment

Jim Smalley of 352 Kearsarge Way: Spoke regarding zoning incentives and how they are not adequate for supporting affordable housing needs. Specifically, the detriment of FAR and building height to housing development. Also mentioned was the need for policy change as inclusionary zoning does not work as it forces less housing to be built – "let the housing market decide."

VI. Adjournment

Joanne Kelly: Calls for motion to adjourn.

Mary Loane: Motion to adjourn.

Jennifer Stebbins Thomas: Second.

Joanne Kelly: Calls vote.

All in favor: All.

Opposed: None.

Motion passes with unanimous vote of approval.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:08 p.m.