



Meeting Minutes

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

Thursday, April 11th 2024
5:30 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Kelley at 5:30pm

I. Roll Call

Chairperson Joanna Kelley: 5:30p.m.

Present: Erik Anderson, City Manager Karen Conard, Megan Corsetti, Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelley, Tracey Kozak, Mary Loane, Byron Matto, Dagan Migirditch, Councilor Beth Moreau, John O'Leary, Councilor John Tabor, and City Staff Peter Britz, Peter Stith, Howard Snyder. Absent: Jen Stebbins Thomas

II. Approval of 3/7/2024 and 3/21/2024 Meeting Minutes

Beth Moreau: Motion to approve minutes as amended by Erik Anderson. Byron Matto: Second.
In favor: Unanimous.
Opposed: None.
Minutes approved.

III. Discussion of Goal Statement

Joanna Kelley motion *"Create changes that support 500 permitted units of diverse, affordable housing over the next two years that creates long term market sustainability."*

John O'Leary: Motion to approve.
Beth Moreau: Second.

Discussion:

John O'Leary: Comma between diverse and affordable. Differences between affordable and workforce?

Joanna Kelley: General consensus of definition from HUD statements as to affordable.



Beth Moreau: Affordable leaves, is broad enough to include terms such as workforce.

Erik Anderson: Amend motion to eliminate number 500. At last meeting it was discussed as aggressive. Does not distinguish between city and private sectors responsibility. If it is all of city's, is 500 realistic?

Megan Corsetti: Second.

Megan Corsetti: Goals statement as a starting point, what about objectives such as adjusting zoning, incentives, and others? Portsmouth listens' recent effort has measurable goals.

Dagan Migirditch: 1,500 is by the end of a decade.

Dagan Migirditch: Motion to add "at least" as to articulate last part of the goal better.

Beth Moreau: goal needs 500 to help create actions. Set the sights to where we need to get.

John Tabor: 500 made aggressive, set the needs, Somersworth accomplished 400. It is important to have a goal without getting too deep into policy.

Erik Anderson: Will we have public comment for the motion?

Joanna Kelley: Explains various committees have their own guidelines on public comment portions of their meetings. We have our public comment portion later in the meeting.

Megan Corsetti: We are able to make recommendations, not policies?

Joanna Kelley: *Roll call vote on removing 500 from the goal statement.*

In favor: Erik Anderson.

Opposed: Megan Corsetti, Joanna Kelley, Tracey Kozak, Mary Loane, Byron Matto, Dagan Migirditch, Beth Moreau, John O'Leary, John Tabor.

Motion fails.

Dagan Migirditch: Motion to amend the last clause to include identify, adapt or dismantle government barriers create changes 500 permitted diverse permitted.

John O'Leary: second.

Discussion:

John Tabor: Consideration for the term "dismantle" – sounds as a hell-bent means to removing an impediment, dismantling rip apart and destroy. Could amend be a better word?



Howard Snyder: Notes goals are loftier and members are trying to add very granular terms and thinking. Talks about goal identifiers and actions and strategies as ways to implement.

Dagan Migirditch: Rescind of motion.

John O'Leary: Second.

Discussion:

Debate on whether setting a specific numerical target (e.g., 500 units every two years) was realistic or overly ambitious given current resources and zoning limitations.

Discussion on the importance of measurable goals and the need for a comprehensive strategy that includes zoning adjustments, incentives, and potentially new tax benefits for contributing landlords.

Joanna Kelley: Goal is to navigate the way housing is to be created. Goal as a strategic plan for the committee to make recommendations to other boards.

Byron Matto: "Up to" is limited and should be removed. Up to change to at least.

Erik Anderson: What is the expectation of private and public in the goal statement?

Mary Loane: In the spirit of Byron's wording, add "create long term sustainability."

Joanna Kelley: *Call vote to table the motion.*

In favor: Unanimous.

Opposed: None.

Motion tabled.

IV. Committee Member Comments:

a. Committee member request: Communication

John O'Leary: Concerns on goals outcome based missing communication, take the time to tell the story, what and why doing it better chance for community support. Try to be responsive to public, open process, and all residents respectfully. Keep all informed. Questions regarding PHA presentation.

Erik Anderson: Asked about number of units and this second application. When would transfer of property be received - mid-May? Concern on Portsmouth residents - how does PHA preference ruth survey number of Portsmouth residents before moving in? What else does PHA have in their plate? What is their structure in place to handle two projects at the same time?



John O'Leary: Suggestion to City Council to issue an RFQ as there needs to be vetting. City to do an appraisal on the other four properties. If there is a lease on the land the lease money city gets goes into first-time homebuyers' program. Asks the committee to outline long-term plan efforts – timeline.

Erik Anderson: (Reads handout) Committee is being very aggressive, urgency, needs to slow down. The PHA presentation was not complete. "Application" what does it mean? and intentions of development? Whose timelines are we working on - city or PHA? hands out petition – 165 signatures voicing concern – for the record.

Dagan Migirditch: Agree on notions of transparency, challenge on thoughts that we are moving with haste.

Joanna Kelley: Statements to reclarify scope of conversation.

Tracey Kozak: Agree on transparency.

Mary Loane: I am a resident of Pannaway and did not receive the petition. Questions about the petition being submitted.

V. Housing Navigator Update

Howard Snyder: Outlines the online forms submitted by residents using the housing web portal and the documents attached in the meeting packet.

VI. Public Comment

Rick Becksted @ 1393 Islington St.: Application from PHA. Ruth Griffin – affordable units number or percentage. There has got to be questions on structure of the board as two members are involved with the local housing and construction industry.

Gerry Duffy @ 428 Pleasant St.: Next door to PHA housing. Recognition of PHA efforts – understand residents of PHA feel sandbagged. Neighborhoods want to consider what they consider valuable. Sherburne School owned by city housing problem is a city wide issue and we all have a say. Location of Pannaway Manor residents' location and traffic study. Support – PHA not on a profit driven portfolio. Support to move forward.

Ruben Yzaguirre @ 337 Colonial Dr.: Speaks on traffic with images on screen. – Pannaway neighborhood taxed with traffic. Traffic study previously done.

Tom Kaufhold @ 53 Rogers Street: Fears with housing developments by PHA are not realized. Listening circles helped change – parking and parking lots not a good use in the downtown. Support working on getting housing where we can.

Adam Ruedig of PHA: On the board of directors and serve as a volunteer with PHA that is a non-profit. The accusations are not fair. Ways to kill housing projects – time for community to stop – PHA created for bringing federal housing funding into the city to create housing. Responds to



questions and statements about PHA that were previously made. Lawsuits slowed the Ruth Griffin Place project to the six years it took to build.

Petra Huda @ 280 South St.: Minutes difficult to follow and packet is confusing. Content – definition of housing is 204 not 205. Information from the previous Land Use Committee has not been given to this committee.

Aaron Garganta @ 423 Colonial Dr.: Goals discussion from earlier – master planning approach to workforce housing in Portsmouth and surrounding communities. Build bridges with other communities to build housing. Include both affordable and workforce level housing in goal statement. Some city owned properties better for workforce housing and others for affordable. What has been the selection process – different properties than the police station list. Specific to Sherburne – development will have challenges – highway and industrial complex nearby. Housing density – zoning – type of structure that will be built. What will the disposition of the school be?

Manny Garganta @ 471 Colonial Dr.: Atheneum move over to school.

Genevieve Becksted Muske @ 9 Schurman Ave.: Attended Land Use Committee meetings regarding properties. Each one has adversities. Questions on how the project has been presented. Taking away ballfield. From girls they don't have any other place to go taking green space. Misrepresentation of the project. It is our neighborhood, and it is being taken away from us.

Nicholas Ristaino @ 478 Colonial Drive: Support for housing project on the school site. Committee and council make decisions based on facts and data. Best interests of the city. Homelessness and lack of housing. There is a need for these projects and there will not be full agreement.

Ethan Underhill @ 55 Ocean Rd. Unit #17: Attended Portsmouth listens sessions, learned new resident context of housing. Statistics on housing percentage and how old the discussion is – PHA study, 2017 report, great many residents want to attract and retain residents. More residents want choice on housing.

Cami Saunders: PHA has it listed as signature project on their website - is this a done deal? Feels like it. Nothing against housing, it doesn't fit in our neighborhood. Traffic an issue. One way in and one way out. No other place for cars to go. Gosling Meadows has a reputation, don't bring that into our front yard. Find another situation like the Episcopal Church project.

Bill St Laurent @ 253 Colonial Dr.: Pannaway Manor have ideas that have been presented by neighbors – presentation at Sherburne school was full – 98 percent of people at the event were opposed. Go slow – heads of the city forcing this to happen – other places not looked at. Who are these people? Who are we helping? What about the park across from city hall? Is this still a done deal. Pannaway Manor is a dead end street.



Ronald Martenson @ 180 Sherburne Rd.: Discusses neighborhood changes over last 20 years. It started as a working-class neighborhood. Concern about their ability to afford living in Portsmouth – this project would be a travesty if not built. People concerned about the type of people that will be attracted – they are all great people. Traffic will not be a factor. End of the day I see the project moving forward.

John Logan @ 130 Dennett: Favors affordable housing in the city – concerned about what is happening across the country. Difficult political issue – opposing is easy – city council will take the heat on any decision. This is just the first of many housing decisions, other neighborhoods will also come forward about defending versus addressing a city-wide issue. These are community building projects. Origins of Pannaway Manor was workforce subsidized housing.

Andrea Pickett of PHA: Invite to tour facilities to see what Ruth Griffin Place and workforce housing looks like. Outreach and engagement to move forward together.

Craig Welch of PHA and @ 77 South St.: We are here to execute on aims of city council. I am available for discussions. Discusses preferences and income limits, timeline with the city council, and constraints. PHA develops with tax credits and there is only one time a year to apply. Permit by August and put finance together.

VII. Committee Member Requested Motion

Joanna Kelley: Member submitted motion *“Recommend that the City Council works toward the official disposition and land lease of Sherburne School property for the creation of permanent, below market rate housing.”*

Byron Matto: So moved.

Dagan Migirditch: Second.

Discussion:

John O’Leary: Question regarding the term “disposition.”

Karen Conard: Any process the City would run for surplus property. Question to City Council would be run city council would determine what the process would be.

Erik Anderson: Asks if a vote on motion would remove this committee from further discussions on site specific aspects of the project.

Joanna Kelley: Explains city council would make requests of the committee for recommendations and insights. Details will come back to this committee on what recommendation the HC would make to the council.



Erik Anderson: Details of this project will come back to this committee for further discussion. Concerns on the motion as there has been and there is so much discussion that needs to occur. Reads from PHA application to the State for funding.

Joanna Kelley: Clarifies PHA or any other developer are not mentioned, or partnerships considered in the motion. Further explanation in the purpose and intent of the motion. The City Council is looking to the committee to start the process of disposition of the property. This motion does not tie us to a developer or developing the land, starts the process of discussion in a more formal manner.

Erik Anderson: Reto table the motion. Not enough time to discuss it all. Rushing the project. Previous presentation to PHA about funding – too many questions remain.

Beth Moreau: Sees the motion as asking the City Council as to what they want to do with the property – maintain ownership or sell on the open market. That is a policy decision of the council that would then give this committee a direction to go.

Megan Corsetti: Should the motion move forward to the City Council; they would direct staff about the property and the process would involve the public?

Joanna Kelley: If the motion moves forward, intent is to present at the next City Council meeting for their discussion.

Megan Corsetti: Assuming there is an RSA process to follow for disposition of land. Questions if we getting the information from the citizens and acting with integrity. More public engagement is needed. Make sure the council implements actionable items.

Dagan Migirditch: Imperative to do this right, motion needed to proceed and at that point more process can occur and all the questions that need to be asked. Support not tabling motion.

John O'Leary: Council will refer to planning board, they will discuss and hold public meetings and then they will make recommendations to the Council. Opportunity then for people to give more input.

Joanna Kelley: Multiple bodies will be involved and multiple opportunities for public comment.

Joanna Kelley: Roll call vote on tabling motion.

In favor: Erik Anderson and Megan Corsetti.

Opposed: Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelley, Tracey Kozak, Mary Loane, Byron Matto, Dagan Migirditch, Councilor Beth Moreau, John O'Leary, Councilor John Tabor.

Opposed: Megan Corsetti and Erik Anderson.

Motion passes.

Joanna Kelley: Roll call vote on main motion.



Discussion:

Joanna Kelley: Is it all encompassing, and we are not setting policy. We are making recommendations and City Council will determine the policies for the disposition.

Joanna Kelley: Calls roll call vote on main motion.

In favor: Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelley, Tracey Kozak, Mary Loane, Byron Matto, Dagan Migirditch, Councilor Beth Moreau, John O'Leary, Councilor John Tabor.

Opposed: Megan Corsetti and Erik Anderson.

Motion passes.

Joanna Kelley: Motion to adjourn.

John Tabor: So moved.

Beth Moreu: Second.

Adjournment at 8 p.m.