



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

**August 14, 2024
5:30 p.m.**

I. Roll Call

Meeting Called to Order by Co-Chair Kelley at 5:33p.m.

Co-Chair Kelley calls roll call:

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

II. Council Request for Guidance on Municipal Property at 35 Sherburnee Road.

The City Manager and her team have finished going over the 8 RFQs for the Sherburne School Redevelopment project and have selected four developers to advance to RFP submissions. Notifications going out Aug 15. She requested that the Housing Committee find some type of consensus on some of the things we would like to see in the RFP from this Advisory Board.

To review what City Council said:

- a proposal with the school building and one without. Some people have an emotional attachment with that building but it's also worth noting that the building has been pretty much neglected for the last 15 to 20 years
- Units offered for a range of income not just 80% or not just 60% but from an average median income up to 100% And then down to 60% or even lower 50%. Better to have the developer have a mix of incomes than have the city have to subsidize
- Overwhelming support for a ground lease versus selling land
- Softball field will be replaced elsewhere in the city at the Community Campus so that's less of a priority to keep versus the school building
- Don't want to stifle their creativity because they may suggest something that we hadn't thought . So in addition the two options that the staff and the manager presented there may be a third or fourth or fifth different types of option with regards to the mix and types of housing uh again I would leave that open to the professionals



This is kind of a test of what is to come throughout the city with other sites and so people are going to gauge this particular project against others that are selected or discussed in the future.

There are density and green space consideration and it's going to be important for us to take a look at how it blends with the neighborhood and the community.

What we've seen locally with PHA is that the long-term management of the facility is just as important as the development itself. I don't know how the RFP would incorporate that thought but I think it would be appropriate for any developer to express how their long-term management policy will work.

I believe the city council is looking for guidance from the Housing Committee on what other type of open space either Rec passive or Active Space would they like to see requested in the RFP.

If the RFP is clear enough and says we just want a site plan sketch then that's a whole different thing than saying we want a building design with renderings and unit counts and full budgets.

Sustainability: existing buildings are the most sustainable thing as long as they're not dangerous and if it's possible to reuse them they have a lot of embodied carbon which is the energy it takes to build them in the first place if you tear it down and rebuild you'll never regain that lost energy even if you add solar panels. Do you want a sustainable project or do you want the maximum amount of housing?

I would hope the project will have a good amount of Community driven conversations to then impact what the end design will be.

The genesis for all of this conversation is around creating affordable units and a mixed income is great just not on the fair market side. 100% of average median is below Market. If it helps benefit the much lower income need that was cited in the housing need survey from Portsmouth Listens and whenever there's a diversity of housing with a diversity of income levels it creates a better housing experience.

Need to understand how the property would be managed and how it would feel from a tenant perspective.

Community spaces could help create a more actually used third space. Also innovative open space to complement Pannaway playground and create an opportunity for community members from across all the different neighborhoods to come together. Maybe Child Care.

Against doing any additional Municipal support and except the land itself. The city should stay in line with the our 2006 adopted housing policy which says that the city will take supportive actions not necessarily monetary: number of parking space, tax incentives and abatements in the way that we have before.

Traffic impact -- we want to make sure that we're looking at broad spectrum of community impact and not limiting it to only direct abutters. I agree with Tracy that we should build into the RFP a robust public input process at the start



Megan Corsetti:

1. whatever additions are made to the area they blend well with the existing area
2. in speaking to some of the immediate impacted neighbors preservation of the school did seem important as it is something they are familiar with viewing on a regular basis also with the initial proposal made in January 23 with a large scale development keeping the school seemed most important so that several multi storing buildings would not dwarf the surrounding homes
3. have an addition that feels blended with the community; one that's welcoming and desirable to newer residents
4. address the concerns expressed by community members on traffic and congestion in an area that's already bottlenecked mix of housing
5. stick with rentals that's the most definitive way to ensure that the costs remain affordable -- include a mix of below Market Workforce and market with the majority being offered at Workforce rate. The diversity is important
6. open to seeing plans that include bringing some amenities to the new and existing neighborhood the master plan cited such ideas but we have yet to see that
7. I favor ground lease for 50 to 99 years um that ensures the new community has appropriate upkeep and there's an escalation pathway should there be a concern noted by an immediate neighbor or new resident of the new community

Erik Anderson: I understand it's a city-owned property but what would be the process that would be followed to kind of answer Eric's question what process would a developer follow on this particular property even though it's City owned property you mean just as far as plan approval so they would still go to our technical advisory committee and go to the planning board for site plan review so there would be opportunities for public comment and public outreach.

Adjourn 6:39 pm