

Housing Committee

Meeting Minutes

July 7, 2026, 6:00 PM

58 Barre Street, Montpelier, VT 05602, US

Committee Members Present: Alyssa Schuren (Chair), Lauren Hurl (Vice Chair), Ben Linder, Sean Sheehan, Tim Heney, Alex Halasz, Dan Wheeler

Absent: Dan Coppock, Sandy Vitzthum

Staff Present: Mike Miller, Matt Jelacic

Public Present: Alan Goldman (remote), Stephen Whitaker. Jeff Dube (presenter, 802 Homes), Seamus Lombardo, Tim Sinnott (Planning Commission liaison)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Welcome From The Chair

The Chair welcomed members and guests and noted that Sandy Vitzthum was unable to attend as she was traveling internationally.

3. Review Minutes From June 16, 2026

The modified AI-generated minutes from June 16, 2026 were briefly discussed and accepted as presented.

Motion to approve the minutes from June 16, 2026 was made and seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Public Comment

Alan Goldman requested that draft mapping materials be shared with him. Stephen Whitaker raised a concern regarding the lack of documentation for comments submitted to the Country Club Road Subcommittee, which the Chair indicated had been emailed to the committee. Mr. Whitaker also noted concern that tax increment financing estimates for two finalist proposals were being withheld from public view.

5. Committee & City Updates

The Chair reported that Housing Trust Fund amendments would be presented to City Council the following evening, and that the next committee meeting would include an

update from Seamus on development fees and a discussion of a proposed vacancy ordinance. The Chair also shared that VHFA housing data for 2014–2024 showed significant housing growth in Berlin and Barre Town relative to Montpelier.

Matt reported that a CHIP pre-application for Isabel Court would be presented to City Council, and that a UVM professor had offered city interns who could assist with a vacant property inventory project—framed as neutral research to inform a potential vacancy ordinance.

6. City Fees – Mike Miller

Planning Director Mike Miller presented a draft fee schedule for zoning and building permits. Key points included: administrative permit fees are decreasing due to lower staff time requirements; Development Review Board fees are increasing significantly (from approximately \$100 to \$400) to reflect actual costs now that fewer applications require DRB review; building permit fees are being aligned with state rates; and appeal fees have risen to \$1,600. Miller noted the department currently collects approximately \$18,000 annually against a \$30,000–\$35,000 budget target. Committee members raised concerns about whether fee increases send the wrong message during a housing shortage, and suggested that a comprehensive view of all city fees—including public works and sewer connection fees—be provided to applicants. The committee requested that the item be deferred to mid-August on the City Council agenda to allow Seamus's comparative fee research to inform the discussion. Miller agreed to share the department's comparative fee spreadsheet with the committee.

7. 802 Homes Presentation – Jeff Dube

Jeff Dube of the Vermont Department of Community Development presented the 802 Homes initiative, a three-part program to support small-scale "missing middle" housing development (roughly single-family to quadplex). The program includes a developer toolkit, a training program, and a catalog of up to ten pre-reviewed home designs built to Vermont state building codes, intended to reduce permitting timelines and increase predictability. Designs incorporate universal design and aging-in-place features and accommodate both traditional and off-site/modular construction methods. Three pilot communities are currently partnering on streamlined permitting roadmaps. The program is expected to launch in December 2026, with designs freely available to Vermont developers. Committee members expressed enthusiasm and raised questions about applicability to non-infill sites, off-site manufacturing capacity, and financing pathways.

8. Draft Land Use Map – Tim Sinnot, Sandy Vitzthum & Tim Heney

Tim Sinnot, Planning Commission liaison, presented a draft proposed growth center boundary expansion developed in coordination with Tim Heney and Sandy Vitzthum. The analysis layered parcels intersecting 100-foot sidewalk buffers, current sewer service areas, and existing housing zoning districts to identify the broadest defensible growth boundary for submission to the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

(CVRPC) in support of Tier 1A designation under Act 181. The proposed boundary represents a substantial expansion from the current 2019 growth center. Committee members generally supported the concept as a means of focusing development within the city while protecting rural lands. Questions were raised regarding suburban parcels with limited infill potential, industrial zones, and the implications of Act 250 exemptions for non-residential development. Stephen Whitaker cautioned that Tier 1A criteria include multimodal transportation and walkability, not only water and sewer, and expressed opposition to including Country Club Road at this time.

The committee agreed to forward general support for the concept to the Planning Commission, which was scheduled to take up the matter at its next meeting.

9. Committee Prioritization

Deferred to the next meeting.

10. Next Steps

The next meeting was confirmed for August 4, 2026, to be held at City Hall. Agenda items will include committee prioritization, the vacancy ordinance, and the city fee discussion.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:31 PM.