

**Montpelier Housing Task Force
Meeting Minutes
December 13, 2018
5:15 to 7:00 PM
Montpelier City Hall – Council Chambers**

Members Present:

Laura Biren
Brian Evans
Mary Alice Bisbee
Jack McCullough
Liz Genge
Mary Hooper
Jen Hollar
Laura Gebhart
Polly Nichol
Kevin Casey, Staff

1. Introductions and Approval of the Agenda

Meeting called to Order at 5:21 p.m.

2. Approval of November Meeting Minutes

Mary Hooper Made a motion to approve Jack McCullough Seconded, motion passed.

3. Public Comment

No Public Comments

Liz mentioned the Subsidy and Care Program and that she would like to discuss this work at a future meeting. Polly suggested that this would be a good future agenda item.

4. Possible Legislation on the Disposition of State Owned Property

Mary Hooper mentioned that the state legislature has convened a subcommittee to look at the process for disposition of public property. Polly Nichol commented that she would like to give Affordable Housing Developers a first chance opportunity to determine the feasibility of converting state owned property to housing. Mary Hooper is moving it forward and will report back if there is any progress. Polly suggested that the model could be similar to how private mobile home parks must be offered first to the residents, giving them an opportunity to create a coop. Mary will have some legislation drafted and the draft will be shared with the HTF.

5. Loan Funds Restructuring – MHTF Input

Kevin presented the loan fund restructuring memo to the Task Force. The purpose of the restructuring is to more properly align the loan funds with Housing Goals, Economic Development Goals and ensuring that we meet our ADA obligations. Accordingly, the Housing restructuring proposal is to combine all the housing funds (HPG, Unrestricted, Heaton Woods, and ½ of Capital Plaza funds, and the Trust Fund allocation) under 1 Revolving Loan Fund . This would allow for more flexibility and to eliminate antiquated or duplicative programs.

Kevin specifically cited the Housing Preservation Grant (HPG) which provides 0% interest loans to low income homeowners for immediate and necessary repairs. Kevin cited the existence of the Green Mountain Home Repair loans for qualified homeowners, which is essentially the exact same program. In light of that duplication Kevin suggested that maybe the HTF and the City should consider eliminating that program and putting more emphasis on Downstreet's program to help LMI individuals in Montpelier. The question arose about whether or not there was a substantial difference in the programs and whether or not there was existing funding for Montpelier projects. Liz said she would research the funding level of Green Mountain Home Repair Program for Montpelier. Kevin will provide a summary of the other programs available for emergency funding, home repairs, weatherization etc.

Laura Gebhart said she supported the reorganization of the loan funds and that anything to increase housing and economic development was moving in the right direction. She will be working with Kevin on the Economic Development portion of the reorganization.

Polly suggested that the Task Force be allowed to weigh in before it goes before council and that we should create a subcommittee to review prior to submitting to council. Kevin agreed.

6. Sustainable Montpelier Coalition –

7. **Follow Up on Presentation of HTF Guidelines Update to City Council –** Jack reported that the presentation before council went extremely well and Council was very supportive of the Task Force's work and Polly and Mary were very well received by council.

Jack also mentioned the Council heard the request from the Silver Maple groups request for the City to commit \$800,000 to buy a portion of the Stonewall Meadows property and to create a public park surrounding their 18-36 unit development. Jack felt that the council wanted to see more units developed for that type of investment by the City and that the park was less a priority since it would serve only a small portion of the city. It was noted that Mayor Watson expressed her strong support for many more units than the 12-30 units than were proposed by the Silver Maple Group.

8. Status of City Budget Process –

There was a question about the current funding amount after the most recent budget discussions. Jack was pretty certain that the current amount was approximately \$115,000. Kevin said he would reach out to Todd to get the current number. Jack mentioned that there is strong support on the council for increasing funding for the Housing Trust Fund.

9. Update on Warming Shelter –

KC spoke with Fire Chief Gowans and he said since it opened in November there have no issues that he is aware of. Kevin reached out to Chief Facos but was not able to make contact.

10. General Announcements and Updates

Downstreet, VHCB, and Franklin Square I and II will be coming looking for funding for the reorganization of the condominium association. Rick Deangelis and Eileen Peltier will be attending the next meeting to present the project goals, challenges and ask from the Task Force and the City.

French Block opening will be Thursday January 3, 2019. Liz mentioned that they are leasing these up and the market rate for the 1 bedrooms will be \$900 and include all utilities and internet access.

Laura Gebhart mentioned that the Montpelier Development Corporation (MDC) is working on its 2019 priorities. She mentioned that the priorities will focus on developing business expansion and retention programs. In addition, helping to develop housing programs and promotion will be a primary focus for the MDC in 2019.

11. Items for Next Agenda:

Loan Fund Restructuring
Franklin Square Request
Budget Update
Next Meeting Date is January 17th

12. Meeting Adjourned