Housing Task Force Meeting Minutes
September 20, 2012

Attendees:

Jack McCullough, Vermont Legal Aid

Polly Nichol ,VHCB

Kevin Casey , Community Development Specialist

Jo Anne Troiano, Montpelier Housing Authority

Liz Genge, CVCLT

Diane Sherman, Barre St. CAN

Luke Rafferty, Americorp VISTA

Drew Devitis, Americorp VISTA

DS: updated the group on the Barre Street CAN group and the success of the neighborhood yard sale, pancake breakfast, and canvassing/surveys.

KC: Updated the group on the progress of the Barre Street Tree Planting initiative. Kevin mentioned the work with Geoff Byers of the Parks Department and John Snell, Chairman of the Tree Board. The plan as it currently stands is to plant 25 trees this fall on Barre Street. Kevin is working with John to talk to Landlords and homeowners to gauge their interest and get permission. He is coordinating with Liz Genge and JC Myers of CVCLT to find locations that are suitable.

JM: Asked for any other updates

Polly and Joanne: Resource Guide has been slow in going. Mainly due to other projects and a busy summer.

Kevin: Suggested Luke and Drew might be helpful in getting the process moved along if Jo and Polly could get them written notes and they could make the edits and get something on the web.

Liz: Housing 101 conference will be held at the State House Pavilion building on September 28th from 9-1 pm

Diane: Informed the group that she will no longer be able to attend as she is taking a new job in Burlington and due to the commute time, she will unklikely be able to attend the meetings. She is going to keep moving forward with the Barre Street CAN group, Kevin can give the updates at the meetings.

KC: Mentioned that the USRDA did not approve the 2012 HPG application. This is the first time in almost 25 years that Montpelier did not receive HPG funds from RD. However, the number of low and very low income homeowners in Montpelier makes the program difficult to administer because there are very few people who qualify, as they are just over the income limits. Kevin suggested that we need to develop programs to incentivize young families to move into town. This can be done if we can increase the income guideline to 100% AMI or 120% AMI. With the amount of money available in HPS Income coupled with Housing Trust Fund monies, we might be able to create a program which would match down payment funds, assist in closing costs. The benefits would be tremendous as it would get more children into our schools. Kevin wondered if it would be against any discrimination laws to create a program like this which was focused only on people with children.

Another idea proposed would be to use these monies to pay for technical assistance to architecture students to assist homeowners who might want to create an accessory apartment. Many seniors may feel overwhelmed at the scope of a construction project. Kevin suggested that some of the Architecture programs might be interested in providing some sort of technical assistance in the form of student aid. Kevin will contact Matt Lutz at Norwich to discuss options for some sort of collaborative with Norwich , a type of technical assistance center for architecture students.

Polly: The Individual Development Accounts that we discussed with Mary Niebling would be a great way to attract young people. We should discuss some of the issues with income limits. Polly was hesitant to go to 120% AMI, however she would do some research to see what is available. Polly spoke with Jim Libby and he had some great questions which we can discuss if time permits.

Jack: We should have a fuller discussion on this after other updates

Polly: Barbara Conroy is an Architecture Professor at VTC, she might be a possible contact for projects with Students

Joanne: Having something like this available would be great. Jo relayed that when she purchased her first house it was still affordable, she cannot see how a young family could do it now without two incomes.

Jack: Updates on the Dickie Block

Liz: CVCLT prefers to call it French's Block, to keep the historical context , and it sounds better.

Jack: Should we adjust meeting times or days, Brian Pine from CEDO might be able to come to our next meeting as we our now changing the day to the Third Monday of every month rather than the 3rd Thursday.

Kevin: Will check with Police Department Community room to set it up, for October 15th at 5:15 pm. And he will publically notice the next meeting and all future meetings when he gets confirmation.

Jack: Would like to have a more full discussion of Jim Libby's conversation/questions with Polly.

Polly: In our June Discussion with Mary Niebling the CVCAC charges $500 for IDA set up and $100 year maintnenance fees. Some importnant questions to ask: 1. Is this eligible under the Housing Trust Fund Guidleines 2.There would need to be an asset screening process in place to insure eligibility 3. What other funds could we leverage in order to make this attractive to young families 4. What would be the best us eof the funds 1:1 or 2:1 match or buy down of interest rates 5. Creating a marketing package of available incentives etc., We will need to move on this rather quickly and call a meeting of the Housing Trust Fund Committee in October .

Kevin: He Will Schedule it

Diane: Assets should not include Car or Retirement

Polly/Jack/Jo: Agree , not necessary to include car and retirement

Diane: What about people who don't live in the area participating?

Polly: This comes up frequently however, if the person doesn't buy in Montpelier the funds are de-obligated.

Jack: We might be able to make a requirement that 80% of applicants need to be current residents or renters in Montpelier

Jo: Divorcees should be considered 1st time homebuyers and not excluded

Polly: We might want to limit up to median income

Kevin: 120% of Median might make more sense in order to attract the young professional or young family who might make just over the median but are still barely making it as renters in Montpelier due to the rental rates

Jack: Prefers Median because its relatively standard and easier to administer

Polly: Is $10K a match a good incentive ? and as far as the limits are concerned we might want to consider something which establishes that for the first 15 years it is a loan, after 15 it becomes a grant and does not need to be paid back

Jo: This will avoid flipping, the $10K match sounds good because as a match it gets the potential homebuyer to the 10% downpayment on a $200K house.

Jack: Like the direction that we are moving, now we need to have some concrete actions on Individual Development Accounts to present to the Housing Trust Fund Committee

Polly: Kevin Can Call the committee together in October. Polly is willing to put together a Memo for the Housing Trust Fund Committee.

Jack: Adjourn the meeting and move forward with the I.D.A. proposal .

Meeting Adjourned at 7:15 pm