

**Housing Task Force
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday September 19, 2019 5:15 p.m.
Montpelier City Hall
City Council Chambers**

Members Present:

Polly Nichol (Co-Chair)
Jack McCullough (City Council)
Mary Alice Bisbee (Interfaith Action Council)
Kevin Casey (Staff)
Liz Genge (Downstreet & resident)
Bryan Evans (Resident)
Jo Ann Troiano (Montpelier Housing Authority)
Andrew Sullivan (Resident)
Mary Hooper (Resident)
Clare Rock (CVRPC)
Nick Kramer (AmeriCorps: CVRPC)

Guests:

Dan Jones (Sustainable Montpelier Coalition)
Barbara Conrey (Sustainable Montpelier Coalition)

Meeting Called to order at 5:17 p.m.

2. Approval of minutes – July 18, 2019

June 20, 2019

May 16, 2019

Joann Troiano made a motion to approve the minutes

Bryan Evans Seconded

Passed 9-0

3. Public Comment: No members of the public present

4. Updates:

Homelessness Task Force: Jack updated the task force on the status of the Homelessness Task Force and the recent appointment of members. Yvonne Bird is facilitating the meetings and there is significant energy from the participants

Homeshare Now : Homeshare Vermont is merging with Homeshare Now out of Barre in an effort to streamline their programs and provide a higher and expanded level of service.

Article on the Merger in Times Argus:

Homelessness Task Force (cont'd):

https://www.timesargus.com/news/local/homeshare-vermont-to-absorb-home-share-now/article_78cb88bc-10e8-55fa-9d0a-7cc5d32d879b.html

There will be two spots on the board for Central Vermont.

Budget Process: Jack commented that the process would be later than October/ November and Mike commented that administratively the leadership team gets underway in October.

Housing Trust Fund Award: Taylor Street Housing Project & 1st Time Homebuyers Program :

Kevin updated the Task Force on the 9/18 meeting of the Housing Trust Fund Committee which approved \$85,000 for the Taylor Street Housing Project. In addition the Trust Fund Committee approved a change in the maximum award for the first time homebuyer program from \$7500 to \$10,000. Additionally the award may be increased to \$15,000 if the City Staff and the staff at Downstreet determine that the need is there to justify an award amount.

ADU Pilot : Kevin reported that the ADU program is underway and that VSHA and City Staff are working through some of the barriers that exist (predominantly due to funding source) but he anticipates that there will be no issue hitting the target numbers as outlined in the Draft Comments to the Vermont Community Development Board.

Good Samaritan Fundraiser: Jack commented that the event was well attended and worthwhile to attend to support their mission.

Taylor Street Opening and Celebration: Downstreet has the opening on October 9 and will be open to the public to tour the facility and see the progress of the final project
Others

5. Montpelier Master Plan – Housing Section – Mike Miller

Jack asked Mike about what the proposed Timeline for the updated Master Plan. Mike mentioned that the HPC was completed, Housing is most done, and Energy Committee will have their plan completed in 2020 with the help of a consultant.

Mike mentioned that the general outline of the master plan update is to provide an aspirational statement of what it is we want to accomplish in housing. Then we set goals, with a vision of what it is we want to accomplish and use the same language the state uses in our explanation of these goals. Do

we want to Evolve, Maintain, or Transform? Once we understand what it is we want to accomplish we can recommend strategies that will accomplish aforementioned goal.

Mike wanted to get everyone's opinion on the direction of the housing section. Polly suggested that we dedicate half of the October meeting to reviewing implementation strategies

Bryan asked whether or not we should also consider addressing issues like Short Term Rentals in the master plan.

6. Proposed Housing Summit –

Clare Rock introduced Nick Kramer the AmeriCorps volunteer who will be working at the CVRPC and will help with the housing summit. Kevin offered to get Nick in contact with Laura Biren who did a fantastic job for the last summit as the City's AmeriCorps member.

7. Conversation with Dan Jones, Sustainable Montpelier

Dan Jones and Barbara Conrey of Sustainable Montpelier Coalition (SMC) and the Energy Committee were on hand to discuss way that the Housing Task Force could partner or support efforts to encourage weatherization efforts in Montpelier.

Barbara mentioned that in addition to weatherization efforts that the Energy Committee is working to develop an Energy Plan to meet the municipal net zero energy goals by 2030 and the entire City Net Zero by 2050.

Dan Jones discussed the SMC's desire to explore other "new models" of housing such as home sharing, cohousing, shared housing).

Mike mentioned that there will be some crossover in the master plan sections and that the goals and strategies should Ideally align.

Polly asked if SMC had any comments on the Draft Housing Section as presented by Mike Miller?

To this end Barbara mentioned that SMC would almost certainly Support Aspiration C Goals B and C (*see below):

(Aspiration C) Housing and neighborhoods will be safe and healthy; energy efficient; resilient in response to disasters; and designed for all users.

Goal b. Improve the long term energy efficiency in our homes.

Strategy: The Housing and Neighborhoods Plan supports the implementation of the energy plan and the aspirations to be Net Zero with respect to electrical use and heating in residential buildings by 2050.

Goal c. Improve the resilience of our homes and neighborhoods in response to disaster.

Strategy: Continue to enforce the ***river hazard area regulations*** in order to prohibit development in the most hazardous areas and to require developers to elevate buildings and add other design features to build safely in the flood hazard area.

Next Meeting Thursday October 17, 2019

Meeting Adjourned at 7:00 pm

Housing and Neighborhoods Implementation Strategy

The City of Montpelier is committed to being an inclusive, equitable, and engaged community (see Governance Chapter). To this end, the planning and implementation of the Housing and Neighborhoods Plan will be accomplished under the guidance of the Housing Task Force with staff support as assigned by the City Manager and funded by the City Council and residents of Montpelier.

As of Fiscal Year 2020 this includes:

- A Housing Task Force of x members;
- A Housing Trust Fund Committee of x members;
- The Task Force meets monthly in City Hall (meetings are not televised);
- The Community Development Specialist is assigned as staff and provides approximately 32 hours of support a month;
- The HPC has no independent budget but manages the Housing Trust Fund and Housing RLF;
- Sufficient resources are provided to meet existing goals and strategies provided the Housing Trust Fund continues to be funded at levels sufficient to support programs and projects.

Goals and Strategies:

(Aspiration A) Montpelier will have a healthy housing market that provides an adequate supply of housing in a mix of types, sizes, and occupancy.

Goal a. Increase housing development until 5% vacancies is achieved in the rental market.

Benchmark: target 5% rental vacancies by 2025. (ACS- rental vacancy 5 year estimate)

Benchmark: net increase of 150 housing units in five years and, if necessary to achieve Benchmark, 240 units by 2025.

Strategy: Develop a **utility and infrastructure incentives program** to support larger housing development that contain a significant portion of rental housing in the mix. The program may use Capital Plaza RLF funding, Tax Increment Finance, or municipal investments in sewer and water infrastructure that have a reasonable payback to the respective funds.

Strategy: Amend **tax stabilization program** to provide incentives to develop commercial rental housing units. **(This is proposed and may be approved soon).**

Strategy: Continue the **Montpelier Accessory Dwelling Unit Program (MAD UP)** even when the program is completed in order to provide assistance to property owners for smaller infill projects including adding accessory apartments.

Strategy: Continue to participate in state designation programs (**Downtown Program** and **Growth Center Program**) and adopt new designation programs (**Neighborhood**

Development Areas Program) that provide benefits to housing developers either through tax incentives or exemptions from state permitting.

Strategy: Amend the **Unified Development Regulations** to incorporate the Municipal Administrative Procedures Act (MAPA) in order to streamline the permitting process.

Strategy: Continue the **Unified Development Regulations** requirement of only one parking space per dwelling unit and having no required parking in UC-1, UC-2, UC-3 and Residential 1500 districts.

Strategy: Continue to allow duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes as permitting uses in many districts close to downtown and larger multifamily as a conditional or permitted use in appropriate districts of the **Unified Development Regulations**.

Strategy: Continue to allow flexibility in the **sprinkler ordinance** to allow alternative methods of compliance by-right for residential buildings with less than 4 units.

Strategy: Amend the **sprinkler incentives program** to add more opportunities to reduce the cost of retrofitting structures for sprinklers.

Strategy: Continue to support individual private housing projects through public-private partnerships including the **One Taylor Street housing project** and other projects that may arise during the lifetime of the City Plan.

Strategy: Develop a new **housing marketing and outreach program** to market the incentives and strategies above to housing builders, developers, and owners of large homes who may be interested in adding additional units.

Goal b. Increase “months-supply” of for-sale housing and maintain around six month supply.

Benchmark: Six months-supply of housing. (Need reference data source)

Strategy: Continue the **first-time home buyers program** which helps to get qualified low and moderate income residents into home ownership. This will help free up rental units and will help move some for sale units and improve the “months-supply”.

Strategy: Continue to participate in state designation programs (**Downtown Program** and **Growth Center Program**) and adopt new designation programs (**Neighborhood Development Areas Program**) that provide benefits to housing developers either through tax incentives or exemptions from state permitting.

Strategy: Amend the **Unified Development Regulations** to incorporate the Municipal Administrative Procedures Act (MAPA) in order to streamline the permitting process.

Strategy: Continue to exempt single unit dwellings from the **sprinkler ordinance** to support development of more single unit homes.

Strategy: Amend the **sprinkler incentives program** to add more opportunities to reduce the cost of retrofitting structures for sprinklers.

Strategy: Develop a new ***housing marketing and outreach program*** to market the incentives and strategies above to housing builders, developers, and potential homebuyers.

Goal c. Maintain a mix of housing types, sizes, and occupancies.

Strategy: Continue to allow a mix of housing types (Single family, duplex, three and four unit structures and multifamily) in most ***Unified Development Regulations*** districts in the zoning regulations.

Strategy: Continue to set residential densities in ***Unified Development Regulations*** at a level that, at a minimum, will make 90% of the properties conforming in the neighborhoods in which they are found.

(Aspiration B) Neighborhoods will be in close proximity to open space and recreational resources; walk-able and bike-able to downtown; with a mix of uses within or having complementary neighborhoods close-by to allow for live, work, shop and play all in a short walk.

Goal a. Increase the number of neighborhoods that have a park or recreation area with a half mile of its edge.

Strategy: The Housing and Neighborhoods Plan supports the implementation strategies outlined in the ***Greenprint conservation program*** to implement the City's parks and recreation plan [link].

Goal b. Improve the walk-ability and bike-ability to downtown from our neighborhoods.

Strategy: The Housing and Neighborhoods plan supports the implementation of the ***complete streets program*** within the Transportation Plan [link].

Strategy: Continue to have residential densities highest close to downtown in the ***Unified Development Regulations***.

Goal c. Improve the live, work, shop, and play concept in neighborhoods that lack access to some of these life options.

Strategy: The Housing and Neighborhoods plan supports the implementation of the ***land use plan*** [link].

Strategy: Continue to allow housing above commercial uses in the mixed use neighborhoods and continue to allow housing as a permitted use in all ***Unified Development Regulation*** districts.

(Aspiration C) Housing and neighborhoods will be safe and healthy; energy efficient; resilient in response to disasters; and designed for all users.

Goal a. Improve the safety and health of our homes and neighborhoods.

Strategy: Continue to enforce **building codes** on all buildings in the city to require minimum safety standards.

Strategy: Continue to enforce the **health codes** in the city to require minimum health standards are maintained.

Strategy: Continue to administer and enforce the **sprinkler ordinance** to protect occupants and residents.

Strategy: Continue to provide incentives through the **sprinkler incentives program** to reduce the cost of retrofitting structures for sprinklers.

Strategy: Conduct a **housing inventory and study** to help guide amendments to the **housing preservation loan program**.

Goal b. Improve the long term energy efficiency in our homes.

Strategy: The Housing and Neighborhoods Plan supports the implementation of the energy plan and the aspirations to be Net Zero with respect to electrical use and heating in residential buildings by 2050.

Goal c. Improve the resilience of our homes and neighborhoods in response to disaster.

Strategy: Continue to enforce the **river hazard area regulations** in order to prohibit development in the most hazardous areas and to require developers to elevate buildings and add other design features to build safely in the flood hazard area.

Goal d. Improve neighborhood accessibility and increase the number of homes that are universally accessible at least on their first floors.

Strategy: The Housing and Neighborhoods plan supports the implementation of the **complete streets program** within the Transportation Plan [link].

Strategy: Amend the **ADA Revolving Loan Fund** program to allow matching fund grants or deferred loans for making houses accessible. This could also be implemented by matching similar programs provided by our partners such as Vermont Center for Independent Living.

(Aspiration D) Montpelier will have housing for all and will affirmatively further fair housing in order to protect people from discrimination, promote economic opportunities, and create a diverse, inclusive community.

Goal a. Where the market fails to provide housing for some persons, the City will support partners in the development of, and provisions for, subsidized housing.

Strategy: Strategy: Continue to support housing projects that may arise during the lifetime of the City Plan.

Goal b. Maintain our current level of coordination and cooperation with our partner organizations.

Strategy: Continue to host a ***Housing Task Force Committee*** composed of our key partners (Montpelier Housing Authority, Downstreet Housing and Community Development), city staff, council members, and members of the public in order to coordinate housing initiatives.

Strategy: Merge the ***Housing Task Force Committee*** and Housing Trust Fund to create better efficiency.

Strategy: Continue the work of the ***Community Development Specialist*** to support grant writing, grant administration, project management, and general outreach to our partners and the public regarding housing planning, projects, and programs.

Goal c. Increase our funding to housing trust fund to reach a sustainable funding level for all initiatives.

Benchmark: The Housing Trust fund should have, at a minimum, \$200k in reserve to support large projects and sufficient other income to support ongoing initiatives like the first time homebuyers program.

Strategy: Increase the annual appropriation to the ***Housing Trust Fund*** such that the \$200k reserve is in place by 2025.

Goal d. Maintain the city's commitment to affirmatively further fair housing by bring to the attention of City Council any area where the city is not fully meeting its obligations.

Strategy: The City will sponsor or support at least one ***housing planning effort*** to identify community housing needs or to study impediments to fair housing before 2025.

Strategy: Formally adopt a ***policy that the city is committed to affirmatively further fair housing*** in the implementation of all its permitting, programs, and projects.