Montpelier Housing Task Force
June 20, 2019 Meeting Minutes
5:15 p.m.
City Council Chambers

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

1. Introductions

Members in Attendance:

Jenn Hollar, Co-Chair
Polly Nichol, Co-Chair
Brian Evans
Mary Alice Bisbee
Liz Genge
JoAnn Troiano
Kevin Casey, staff

2. **Approval of minutes of May meeting**

Kevin reported that he could not locate the notes from the May meeting and will need assistance in preparing the minutes for the next meeting.

3. **Point in time survey –** Liz

4. **Montpelier Housing Trust Fund** – Proposed uses and timing for FY20
5. Updates – Kevin and All

Appointments to the Trust Fund Committee and Guidelines Update

The two public spaces on the Trust Fund Committee have been advertised, at the time of the meeting Kevin reported that he was not aware of any applicants. Mary Hooper and Brian Evans will represent the Housing Task Force on the Trust Fund Committee.

Upcoming requests for the Housing Trust

Kevin anticipates that Downstreet will request the $75,000 from the Trust Fund for the completion of 1 Taylor Street Housing. In addition, there may be a request from the 1st Time Homebuyer's Program. However, there are still some remaining from last year and there will be some paybacks to the HTF as units sell over the summer.

Status of Loan Restructuring Proposal

City Council has approved the Department of Planning and Community Developments process to reorganize the loan funds into a Housing, Economic Development and Accessibility Revolving Loan Funds. The Economic Development RLF Policy rewrite is on hold until a new Executive

Director is hired to replace Laura Gebhart. Kevin indicated that he would work on a draft for the Housing RLF prior to the next meeting and forward along to Polly for comment.

Franklin Square Condos

City Council has approved the $50,000 to assist the Franklin Square Condo Association recapitalize and contribute to the Capital Needs of the Association in return for a release from all future liability regarding the City's role in the development of that project. Kevin is working with the association attorney to prepare the release.

Sabin's Pasture and Vermont College Land

Kevin reported that the Vermont College land is under contract and that the potential developer has hired a team of local consultants to work on some conceptual plans which would include a bathhouse and a housing component. It is still very early in the process but the development team is looking at potential partnerships with the College, Montpelier Development Corporation, as well as the adjacent landowners.

Planning Commission process

Kevin reported that Planning Commission is slightly behind on the Master Plan process as they have been working on the corrections to the Zoning, which has taken longer than anticipated. Kevin reported that there is nothing planned on the books yet in regards to bringing the PC and the different boards and commission together again. Kevin reported that this will likely occur in the fall.

Legislative update including Energy Charter Change-

City Council is going to hold some outreach to the real estate community to get a better idea of the challenges and barriers to implementing an energy disclosure requirement in Montpelier. The Charter Change was signed by Governor on May 30, 2019

No. M-7 Page 1 of 2 2019 VT LEG #342404 v.1 No. M-7.

An act relating to approval of an amendment to the charter of the City of Montpelier. (H.547) It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont: Sec. 1. CHARTER AMENDMENT APPROVAL The General Assembly approves the amendment to the charter of the City of Montpelier as set forth in this act. Voters approved the proposal of amendment on March 5, 2019. Sec. 2. 24 App. V.S.A. chapter 5, § 301 is amended to read: § 301. POWERS AND DUTIES OF CITY COUNCIL * * * (b) In addition, the Council shall have general oversight of the affairs and property of the City not committed by law to the care of any particular officer, including the following powers and duties: * * * (2) Promote and safeguard the public health, safety, comfort, or general welfare by the adoption, amendment, or repeal of ordinances and regulations, including the following subjects: * * * (D) Regulation and enforcement of energy efficiency disclosure requirements for existing and new commercial and residential properties at the time a property is listed for sale.

* * * No. M-7 Page 2 of 2 2019 VT LEG #342404 v.1 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE This act shall take effect on passage. **Date Governor signed bill: May 30, 2019**

Accessory dwelling unit proposal

Kevin reported that the City and VSHA Authority presented the ADU proposal to the VCDP Board on June 12, 2019 . The proposal was well received, based on the meeting minutes that were posted online, the Board has approved $300,000 of the $385,000 requested. No official word yet from VCDP, we anticipate that this will be formally announced by the Governor on the 5th of July.

French Block Update- Liz

As of June the French Block is 100% occupied and the 3 last 3 units leased up in June. The tenants have been very happy with their units.

Liz Provided Links to the Point in Time Report and the PIT for the County.

2019 Point in Time Report

http://helpingtohousevt.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2019-PIT-Report-FINAL.docx.pdf

PIT by County

http://helpingtohousevt.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Copy-of-2019-Vermont-PIT-Count-by-County-and-Local-CoC-Summary.htm

6. **Recovery Residences- Liz**

A Recovery Residence is a group home dedicated to supporting individuals to live independently in the early stages of their recovery from any type of Substance Use Disorder. Most commonly, a RR is a single-family structure housing between 4 and 10 residents in some combination of separate and shared rooms. Small multi-family recovery apartment buildings are growing as a common approach outside of Vermont. Residents pay something for their housing and commit to not using alcohol or illicit drugs during their tenure.

Liz discussed that evidence based practice and a growing body of research is showing that quality recovery housing:

- Reduces costs
- Provides increased financial wellbeing (83% employment)
- Enhances sobriety
- Creates overall stability (family, emotional and quality of life measures)

Who is served by a Recovery Residence?

- People ***actively*** working to live alcohol and drug free lives
- People who desire a ***safe and structured living environment*** with others who share the goal of sobriety

- People who want to ***engage in support, services, or treatment*** opportunities to further their recovery
- People at risk of homelessness because they are in exiting treatment, incarceration, military duty or are living in a home or neighborhood that puts them ***at risk for using***.

John Ryan of Development Cycles prepared the report for Downstreet and the Governor met with staff from Downstreet to present the report in March. A few takeaways from the report:

- ***Housing: A Critical Link to Recovery,*** it is critical that Vermont develop multiple Recovery Residences (RR), an integrated housing and services approach that will provide critical support to Vermonters recovering from Substance Use Disorders.
- The Estimated Need for Additional Six-Person Recovery Residence's in the Barre-Berlin Hub would be 3 residences specifically for women or women with dependent children. The consultant recommends at least one should be the priority in the short term (pg 32)
- A RR is special needs housing that will be located, with few exceptions, in areas of Vermont where the demand for large single-family homes is weakest. Siting these residences will require even more sensitivity to its immediate surroundings than does traditional affordable rental housing, for it needs to balance convenience to treatment, buffer residents from negative community influences, and have the capacity to build a welcoming response from abutters and neighbors. That will be no small task. Even with a well-sited property, the RR provider looking to acquire or substantially renovate such a home may face a serious challenge demonstrating that those costs can be recouped if the property stops functioning as a RR. Some combination of the following strategies may be needed to address this challenge effectively:
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    - Leasing rather than owning the RR
    - Fundraising rather than borrowing for acquisition and/or rehabilitation costs
    - Repurposing homes that are already in the non-profit housing or special needs housing portfolio
    - Negotiating long-term service contracts and operating subsidy commitments as a pre-condition to acquisition
    - Selecting only those single-family properties that have viable adaptive reuse potential as small multi-family rentals
    - Modifying the RR model to allow for the RR to have separate apartments within existing 2-4 family buildings
    - Attaching project-based rental assistance that can transfer to a change of use if needed
    - Funding a loss-reserve pool or loan guarantee program available to the portfolio of VTARR certified properties.

Link to Full Report:

https://gallery.mailchimp.com/b50823c82545ebf18cb704bf5/files/ac6845dd-e23f-4d99-bfe3-8c3b2bcab346/Housing_A_Critical_Link_to_Recovery_Report_6_.pdf?utm_source=mailchimp&utm_campaign=03001ec7e1f0&utm_medium=page

7. **Public Comment-** No Member of the Public were present or offered comment