Montpelier Housing Task Force
Thursday October 17, 2019
5:15 pm – 6:45 p.m.
City Council Chambers
Meeting Minutes

1. Meeting Called to order at 5:15 p.m.

2. Introductions & Members Present:

Polly Nichol (Co-Chair)	Mary Hooper
Brian Evans	Nick Kramer (VISTA at CVRPC)
Joann Troiano	Jack McCullough (City Council)
Liz Genge	Barbara Conrey (sustainable
Kevin Casey (staff)	Montpelier Coalition)
Mike Miller (staff)	Elinor Bacon (MDC)

3. Changes to Agenda: Adding Barbara Conrey to the agenda to discuss finding a volunteer from the Task Force to work with Sustainable Montpelier with a focus on housing. Mary Hooper suggested that Sustainable Montpelier Coalition should consider being a part of the upcoming Housing Summit. Nick Kramer from CVRPC indicated that the Housing Summit will likely occur in early 2020. Polly said she would attend the early meetings to get a sense of what will be needed from a Task Force Member. Liz mentioned that she is already working with Elizabeth Parker and Laura Biren of SMC on their Transportation initiative and she indicated that she would be willing to help but in order to maximize everyone's time and efficiency it might make sense to make sure the efforts of SMC were more coordinated and efficient . Elinor Bacon mentioned that the new Executive Director of the MDC will be involved in the Housing Initiatives and she will forward along her contact information to Barbara Conrey so as to keep MDC in the loop.

4. Approval of minutes September 19 2019

   Joann Troiano made a motion to approve, seconded by Brian Evans. Approved by unanimous consent.

5. Opportunity for Public Comment:

   No Members of the public present

6. Task Force Comments on Montpelier Master Plan – Housing Section – Mike Miller

Mike Miller introduced the draft of the Housing and Neighborhood Implementation Strategy Draft which will be used as the foundation for the Housing Section of the City Plan. The idea behind this process is to start with the community's aspiration, which can then be broken down into a series of goals (with benchmarks) , once these goals are identified we can identify the strategies to accomplish this goal. The proposed strategy might be a project, program, or regulation but we will identify how the City will accomplish these goals with concrete steps. We are getting away from using language that cannot be easily measured (i.e. "encourage"). We believe that this will be a better way to make the City Plan implementable.

Mike mentioned that this is the first step in the process and when the Task Force completes its implementation plan it will go back to the Planning Commission and they will begin to put this together with the plans from the other committees and look for overlaps, symmetry, as well as internal conflicts and inconsistences with other subject matter plans. The goal of the entire rewrite of the Master Plan is to be more strategic in how we approach this.

Prior to the meeting both Polly and Mary compiles a series of comments for the draft of the Housing and Neighborhood Implementation Strategy (*see attached). Mary Hooper's comments are denoted as (MSH) and Polly Nichols as (PN). Comments in RED were discussed at the meeting as the entire committee reviewed,

10-10-19 Comments on Housing Section of Master Plan (forwarded to committee members prior to Task Force Meeting)

Content related suggestions:

Aspiration A:

- *Can we add something that reflects our concern about loss of year round rentals to short-term rentals, even if it's just exploring options at this time? (PN)*
  Jack mentioned that the council is taking this question up, to determine whether the City will require some sort of licensing or registration

  I think we should have a strategy about encouraging senior housing, given the city's demographics (PN). I support this idea, but would suggest we need to also need a strategy that supports encouraging people to downsize. (MSH)
  [MM] indicated that one of the strategies and policies we can consider is a Right Home Policy vs. Aging in Place, which has good intentions but is not always the best for the homeowner. In fact it can run counter to our goals to get empty

nesters to downsize since we will end up subsidizing older people to stay in large homes, which in some cases can be beyond their abilities to care for.

- *Something about adaptive reuse of buildings (i.e. Main St. School if it becomes available, the former funeral home etc.), infill, and mixed use developments (PN)*

- *To the strategy on Accessory Dwelling Unit Program, I'd add: don't tax accessory units for a certain period of time. (MSH)*

Aspiration B: To the aspiration statement, I would add that neighborhoods will be in close proximity to schools (not just open space and rec resources)(MSH)

[MM] there was a very distinct reason for not adding this language, we want to make sure that the proximity to schools is not a barrier to new development. The Task Force agreed with that concern and offered up additional language such that it indicated "learning opportunities", which could also include the senior center, rec center, or other educational and learning opportunities.

Aspiration C: [To Be Discussed at November Meeting]

- *Goal b re. energy efficiency – It would be good to see a strategy that talks about low interest loan funds or other incentives to help landlords achieve this goal (PN)*
- *Goal b--this goal calls for net zero with respect to electric and heating, it should also include transportation, a strategy would be something about sidewalks, and transit opportunities. (MSH)*
- *Goal c re. resiliency – I'd like to see this section support Sustainable Montpelier's ideas regarding rain gardens and other ways of mitigating storm water run-off (PN)*

Aspiration D: [To Be Discussed at November Meeting]

- *Goal b. re. the strategy that talks about merging the Housing Task Force and the Trust Fund committee – is this necessary given the recent amendments to the Trust Fund Guidelines? (PN)*

- *Goal c re. level of funding for the trust fund – Would you consider incorporating some of the ideas for additional, sustainable funding outlined in our memo from a year ago to the City Council? (PN)*

[MM] this can be included in the strategy section as possible options. Kevin will forward that memo to Mike

- *Goal c re level of funding: should include also funding for first time home buyer (MSH)*
-

[MM] this might be a strategy to accomplish the goal since the Trust Fund is a tool to implement a policy.

Questions and Minor Tweaks:

Intro. :

- *# Of members of Housing Task Force – 15? (PN)*

Aspiration A

- *Benchmark – I found the wording slightly confusing. Aren't you really saying that we want 150-240 additional units in 5 years? (PN)*
-

[MM] this was a reflection of our current goal, established in the Economic Development Strategic Plan for 150 housing units by 2022, we are already well on our way with the addition of just over 100 units

- *1st strategy – need an "s" after development in second line* [MM] Noted
- *Tax stabilization strategy – do you mean private sector rentals where you say "commercial"? (PN)*

[JM] This reflects the City Council goal to provide property tax incentives for developers of multi-unit housing. Currently the Tax Stabilization policy focuses on job creation numbers as the metric for tax stabilization, this will provide levels of assistance based on number and type of units being created

- *ADU strategy – insert "pilot" before "program" on the second line (PN)*
  [MM] noted change

- *Strategy that mentions duplexes, triplexes etc. – should be "permitted" not "permitting" (PN)*
  [MM] noted change

Aspiration D:

- *Strategy re. Housing Task Force Committee make-up. Some of the partners such as MHA and Downstreet shouldn't be committee members because they're applicants (PN)*

Elinor Bacon added that we need to address the need for market rate homes and apartments and not just affordable housing. A statement regarding the importance of market rate units in the healthy housing market mix.

7. Proposed Housing Summit – Nick Kramer

   Nick Kramer updated the Task Force on the initial planning meetings with Polly and Rob from Good Samaritan house and that identifying what we want to get

out of the summit is going to be paramount. He identified the three items at the core of the Summit:

a. What are the common problems we (Housing Organizations) are all facing?
b. Identifying the commonalities amongst communities and identifying some best practices
c. Developers should be brought in to get a sense of twhat they are looking for,

8. Volunteer to work with Sustainable Montpelier

Polly said she would attend the early meetings to get a sense of what will be needed from a Task Force Member.

9. Updates:

a. Homelessness Task Force/Bethany Shelter: JM, City Council approved $10,000 to open the Bethany Shelter early. Rob from Good Samaritan House indicated that November 1 was too ambitious but that they ~~wouldhope~~would hope to be able to open it 2 weeks early. Joann mentioned that the Housing Authority may be able to find some funds to keep the shelter open later in the year, which Rob had indicated was also a need.

b. City Budget - What will we be looking for?
Jack informed the Task Force that the council received their initial report from Todd Provencher about the upcoming budget situation. Of greatest concern is a 26% increase in insurance premiums for staff. This includes Level funding of the Housing Trust Fund but it is unlikely there will be any increases.

c. Housing Trust Fund and 1st Time Homebuyers Program: No increase in allocation but the hope is to maintain that funding.

d. ADU Pilot: Underway and there are 7 projects that are in process. Kevin is working with Tyler to get over the administrative barriers to help streamline the project for the future.

e. Taylor Street Opening and Celebration: Opening will occur Friday the 25that from 4-7 p.m.

f. Recovery Housing: Liz will report on this at the next meeting.

10. Agenda for Next Meeting: Polly suggested that we spend the first half of the next meeting reviewing the update for the housing section of the master plan. Mike indicated that he would be willing to attend the November Task Force meeting.
11. Other : No other business

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes taken by Kevin S. Casey, Community Development Specialist