



Agenda

Planning Commission Meeting

Monday, January 13, 2020 at 5:30 PM
City Council Chambers; City Hall

1. Call to order
2. Approval of the agenda
3. Comments from the Chair
4. General business (comments from the public about something not on the agenda)
5. Review and Approve Minutes: December 9, 2019
6. City Plan - Review and discussion of the Housing & Neighborhoods Chapter.
7. Reminder about Public Hearing on the Design Review regulations for next meeting.
8. Adjournment

PC meetings are open to the public. For questions about accessibility or to request accommodations please call (802) 223-9506.

**Montpelier Planning Commission Meeting
December 9, 2019**

Subject to review and approval

This public meeting was recorded, and the video will be available for viewing at this link:
<https://www.montpelier-vt.org/1094/CivicClerk>

Present: Barbara Conrey, Ariane Kissam, Kirby Keeton, Aaron Kisicki, Marcella Dent, Michael Miller.

Absent: Stephanie Smith, John Adams.

Call to order by the Chair: The meeting was called to order by Kirby.

Approval of the agenda: Barb made a motion to approve the agenda as printed, Marcella seconded. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

Comments from the Chair: Kirby met with a local artist about what's going on with art in the community. Three aspirations that Kirby put together is public art, supporting private art, supporting art appreciation and (affordable) education. He'll seek input from Montpelier Alive!

General business (comments from the public about something not on the agenda): No members of the public were in attendance.

Consider minutes from November 25, 2019: Ariane made a motion to approve the minutes, Marcella seconded. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

City Plan – continue review and discussion of the draft Historic & Cultural Resources chapter: The "cultural" part has been pulled out. The Historic Committee is meeting tomorrow to further discuss the draft. It was decided to table this until further feedback has been received.

City Plan – review and discussion of Housing & Neighborhoods chapter: Ariane mentioned that there is a new Homelessness Task Force that might wish to provide feedback. She will have someone get in touch with Mike.

Mike reviewed some ideas to increase housing in the city.

The meeting for December 23 will be cancelled.

Adjournment: Aaron made a motion to adjourn, Barb seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

Tami Furry
Recording Secretary

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, these are the resources currently in effect:

- There is a Housing Task Force that meets once per month in the Council Chambers (meetings are not televised). This group is an ad hoc committee (not appointed by the City Council) formed in 1999 and made up of key housing partners, members of the public, and members of the Council. Our housing partners include representatives from Montpelier Housing Authority, Downstreet Housing and Community Development, Vermont Interfaith Action, Vermont Legal Aid, and Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. New members are always welcome.
- A Housing Trust Fund Committee of 5 members and meets as needed but usually only once per year;
- The Community Development Specialist is assigned as staff and provides approximately 32 hours of support a month;
- The Housing Task Force does not have an independent budget but does plan for programs and projects that use the Housing Trust Fund. The Housing Trust Fund and Housing Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) are administered through the Housing Trust Fund Committee.
- 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, occupancies, and levels of affordability.

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

Benchmark: target to increase rental vacancies from 1% to 5% by 2025. (ACS- rental vacancy 5 year estimate)

Benchmark: net increase of 150 permanent housing units in five years and, if necessary to achieve Benchmark, 240 units by 2028.

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 Housing RLF funding, local Tax Increment Finance, or municipal investments in sewer and water infrastructure that have a reasonable payback to the respective funds. [Priority: Medium; Cost: Low; Who: CD Specialist]

Strategy: Continue the provisions of the **tax stabilization program** that provide assistance in the development of commercial rental housing units.

Strategy: Continue the **Montpelier Accessory Dwelling Unit Program (MAD UP)** even when the pilot 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**) that provide benefits to housing developers either through tax incentives or exemptions from state permitting.

Strategy: Adopt new state designation programs such as the **Neighborhood Development Areas Program** that provide benefits to housing developers either through tax incentives or exemptions from state permitting. [Priority: Medium; Cost: Low; Who: P&CD Director]

Strategy: Amend the **Unified Development (Zoning) Regulations** to incorporate the Municipal Administrative Procedures Act (MAPA) in order to streamline the permitting process. [Priority: High; Cost: Low; Who: P&Z Administrator]

Strategy: While it remains available, continue to use the **State Tax increment Financing Program** to pay for infrastructure improvements that support housing projects.

Strategy: Continue the **Unified Development (Zoning) 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 (Zoning) Regulations**.

Strategy: Continue to exempt in the **sprinkler ordinance** one and two unit dwellings and the addition of new dwellings to existing structures provided other safety considerations are met.

Strategy: Amend the **sprinkler incentives program** (currently providing a 10% discount to municipal taxes) to add more opportunities to reduce the cost of installing sprinklers on residential buildings. [Priority: Low; Cost: Medium; Who: P&CD Director]

Strategy: Continue to **support individual private housing projects through public-private partnerships** that may arise during the lifetime of the City Plan. In the past this has included projects such as the French Block and 61 Taylor Street housing projects.

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. [Priority: Low; Cost: Low; Who: CD Specialist]

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

Strategy: Adopt new state designation programs such as the ***Neighborhood Development Areas Program*** that provide benefits to housing developers either through tax incentives or exemptions from state permitting. [Priority: Medium; Cost: Low; Who: P&CD Director]

Strategy: Amend the ***Unified Development (Zoning) Regulations*** to incorporate the Municipal Administrative Procedures Act (MAPA) in order to streamline the permitting process. [Priority: High; Cost: Low; Who: P&Z Administrator]

Strategy: Continue to exempt in the ***sprinkler ordinance*** one and two unit dwellings and the addition of new dwellings to existing structures provided other safety considerations are met.

Strategy: Amend the ***sprinkler incentives program*** (currently providing a 10% discount to municipal taxes) to add more opportunities to reduce the cost of installing sprinklers on residential buildings. [Priority: Low; Cost: Medium; Who: P&CD Director]

Strategy: Develop a new ***housing marketing and outreach program*** to market the incentives and strategies above to housing builders, developers, and potential homebuyers. [Priority: Low; Cost: Low; Who: CD Specialist]

Strategy: While it remains available, continue to use the ***State Tax increment Financing Program*** to pay for infrastructure improvements that support housing projects.

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

Strategy: Continue to allow a mix of housing types (One unit, accessory units, two units, three and four unit structures, and multifamily) in most ***Unified Development (Zoning) Regulations*** districts in the zoning regulations.

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

Strategy: Amend the ***Unified Development (Zoning) Regulations*** to incentivize the creation of senior housing projects. [Priority: Medium; Cost: Low; Who: P&CD Director]

(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, learn, 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: This 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: This 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: This 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 (Zoning) Regulation** districts.

(Aspiration C) Housing and neighborhoods will be safe and healthy; energy efficient; resilient; 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 survey** to determine if rental units in Montpelier generally meet minimum housing standards. [Priority: Medium; Cost: Medium; Who: CD Specialist]

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

Strategy: This 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.

Strategy: This Housing and Neighborhoods Plan supports the implementation of the Natural Resources Plan and the goal to continue, and improve upon, the City's protection of natural resources and natural heritage. Specifically this plan supports efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of residents through efficient homes and proximate development that supports low energy alternatives for transportation.

Goal c. Improve the resilience of our homes and neighborhoods.

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: This Housing and Neighborhoods plan supports the implementation of the **complete streets program** within the Transportation Plan.

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. [Priority: Low; Cost: Medium; Who: CD Specialist]

(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. 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. [Priority: High; Cost: Medium; Who: CD Specialist]

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. [Priority: High; Cost: Low; Who: CD Specialist]

Goal b. The City will support partners in the development of housing that are not provided by the private market.

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

Goal c. 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: 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 d. 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 including the first time homebuyer program.

Strategy: Increase the annual appropriation to the **Housing Trust Fund** such that the \$200k reserve is in place by 2025. [Priority: High; Cost: Medium; Who: House Task Force]

Strategy: Identify alternative funding options to support the Housing Trust fund over the long term including potentially using the following:

- Reinvest 25% of new revenue from the added value of new development to the Grand List.
- Dedicate 25% of Meals and Rooms Tax to the Trust Fund.

[Priority: Medium; Cost: Medium; Who: Housing Task Force]