

TOWN OF CHESTER
HOUSING COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
February 27, 2024

PRESENT: Nancy Pennell, Hugh Quinn, Jason Rasmussen, Joe Karl, Joel Fineberg, Bill Lindsay, Julie Hance, Preston Bristow

VISITORS: Peter Hudkins; Chris Eggleton

Meeting was held at the Town Hall and via Zoom.

1. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS:

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

2. APPROVE MINUTES:

A motion was made by Bill Lindsay to approve the minutes as drafted. Seconded by Joe Karl. Motion passed.

3. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

None.

4. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL:

Jason asked if we wanted to be more specific about community engagement. Discussion ensued about the purpose of community engagement. The language could be changed to reflect more community awareness. All agreed that community engagement at the beginning of the process to determine what community wants with options presented at the end.

5. UPDATE FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Nancy updated that she been in contact with the Congregational Church. They have put the church back into the 4 C's. John Bryant has been hired to assess the community and make relationships. They have started prayer groups and youth groups. They are looking to reengage the church into the community and open back up as an active church.

Joe Karl stated that Jerry Ucci stated that we should refrain from engaging with the company that runs the old School House Apartments. Joe also stated that he has spoken with the owners of Cummings Hardware. They are hoping to open a business in this space in the near future.

Preston Bristow stated that he has gotten in touch with Ken Kottle who would be happy to come to a future meeting.

46 Peter got in touch with Bob Stone. He stated that he is not a developer. However, he
47 suggested finding a developer that has a management arm as well. Julie stated that SK
48 Management owns and operates Pleasantbrook Housing. She will get the contact
49 information.

50
51 Hugh Quinn stated that he followed up with the Catholic Church but has not heard back. He
52 will follow back up with Father Larry to see if he has heard from the council.

53
54 Joe Karl suggested that something be put in the paper indicating that the town is looking for
55 properties to help develop. Peter suggested that it should target ADU properties. The notice
56 should be crafted to reach both the developers and the landowners.

57
58 Joel stated that typically the developer would approach the town seeking property to
59 develop and seeking the town's assistance to gain access to funding. Jason stated that he
60 agrees, but there is also a timing issue. He stated that the Vermont Housing improvement
61 Program opens in April which helps to fund ADU development. Julie suggested that we take
62 advantage of the election next Tuesday and have a table. Jason will create a one page
63 handout. Joe suggested a tree that shows where we are at today and the path we are on,
64 with bullet points. Joe will make the tree with Jason's assistance. It should address tiny
65 home development, ADU, developer built affordable housing, work force housing, senior
66 housing. Once the one pager is completed, we will see if Scott will print it out in large
67 format. There should also be a sign up sheet to gain contact information. It was also noted
68 that the one pager should reflect commission members and meeting information.

69
70 Bill Lindsay stated that the Chairman of Home Depot is looking into the construction of tiny
71 homes. This could potentially fit into the tiny home park. Joe stated that the sister to
72 Lavalley is Preferred Modulars in Claremont. It would be interesting to see if they can
73 develop tiny homes. Cathy is still interested in her lot being developed for housing.

74
75 It was also discussed that Wheel Pad makes accessible tiny houses as well as Jamaica Cottage
76 Shop. Home Depot sells kits for tiny homes as well. Rollen Homes in Townshend is another
77 constructor of tiny homes.

78
79 Hugh Quinn questioned if the grants that open in April could be used to develop the water
80 and wastewater. Jason stated that there would need to be a unit available for rent at the
81 end. If you take money from this program, the ADU will need to be rented to someone close
82 to homelessness. Sue Bailey used these funds to develop her ADU. She might be willing to
83 come talk about her experience. Jason also noted that with this grant, a deal is made that
84 limits the amount of rent you will collect.

85
86 Joe Karl stated that there are a rash of listings coming on the market. He still has sellers
87 wanting excessive amounts for their property. The volatility is beginning to slow down but
88 still has a bit to go for people to understand where the market is at.

89

90 The Commission discussed the election table. Joe will sit from 5-7; Peter will do 2-5; Preston
91 will do 10-2. Bill Lindsay also suggested using the Telegraph more to get information out.
92 The handout could be given to the Telegraph.

93
94 Jason noted that Vermont Neighborhood Fund does have funds for development of a
95 neighborhood. Could be used for next steps.

96
97 Julie also discussed the Hennessey property on Cummings Road as a potential development
98 site. There are some hurdles as the property is a dumping site and clean up will be required.
99 She will reach out to RPC regarding EPA funds for this property if we use it for a housing
100 development.

101
102 Chris from MARC stated that the ADU expo will be in June this year at the Hartford Tech
103 Center, instead of the fall. She will keep us informed of final dates as they come out.

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105 6. NEXT AGENDA

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107 The next meeting is March 26, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

108
109 7. ADJOURN

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111 A motion was made by Hugh Quinn to adjourn. Seconded by Bill Lindsay. The meeting
112 adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

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