

CITY OF DOVER

AD-HOC COMMITTEE TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY HOUSING NEEDS – MINUTES

Meeting Type: Regular Meeting
Meeting Location: City Hall, Council Conference Room
Meeting Date: Thursday, February 22, 2024
Meeting Time: 5:30 pm

Regular Members: 9

Mayor Robert Carrier, City Council, Chair
George DeBoer, Planning Board
Ryan Crosby, Dover Housing Authority
Betsey Andrews Parker, CAPSC, Vice-Chair
Robert Baldwin
Mark O'Dell
Dorothy Wagner
Ernie Clark
Krysta Gingue

Alternate Members: 3

Mark Speidel, Planning Board
Pam Lessard, Secretary
Leslie Michaud

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Carrier called the meeting to order at 5:30pm. Betsey Andrews-Parker conducted roll call:
Absent: George DeBoer, Ryan Crosby, Mark O'Dell, Mark Speidel, and Leslie Michaud
Additional Attendees: Staff Liaison – Housing Navigator Ryan Pope

2. CITIZEN'S FORUM

Mayor Carrier opened the Citizen's Forum. Citizen's Forum closed with no public comment.

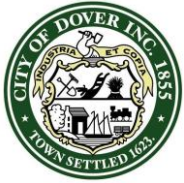
3. APPROVAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 16, 2024

Motion by Rob Baldwin to accept organizational meeting minutes. Second by Dorothy Wagner

4. HOUSING NAVIGATOR UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Housing Navigator Ryan Pope provided the following updates:

- SRPC (Strafford Regional Planning Commission) contracted to provide technical assistance with the Committee's regulatory review and community engagement efforts. This work is being completed with \$65,000 of grant funds received from the InvestNH program. The project steering committee includes City staff and is seeking 1-2 members of the Housing Needs Committee as well. George has been approached because of his dual seat on the Planning Board. The steering committee meets biweekly on Tuesdays at 10am with the next meeting scheduled for 3/5. Angie Cleveland from SRPC will attend the next Housing Committee meeting on 3/28 to update us on the work of this committee. Donna Benton, Planning Director, attended the first meeting.
- 2024 Zoning Amendment proposals include several items related to attainable and diverse housing options. Proposals include defining Emergency Shelter and housing options for adults with disabilities as a permitted uses, revisiting Accessory Dwelling Unit regulations to consider removing the garage requirement for detached units and creating a pathway to convert them to true second units, and revising the Transfer of Development Rights ordinance to better support the creation of attainable homes for purchase.
- The City has been awarded a total of \$560,000 from InvestNH's Municipal Per Unit program in recognition of policies and practices that have created affordable housing options in the City at both the Court House and Cottages at Back River Road. These funds have been set aside so that the Housing Committee may consider potential means to leverage them to support future housing initiatives. Recommended uses will be included in the Committee's report to Council this fall.



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There was a discussion of the importance of having alternates attend to sit in for absent committee members.

5. CONTINUE GOAL SETTING AND WORK GROUP DISCUSSION:

Ryan gave a summary of our work so far on goal setting for the Committee. He stated that in a few short meetings we have been able to analyze the Community Needs survey to get a better sense of community housing needs and desires. In addition, this group was invited by the Planning Board to offer feedback regarding impact fees. We are now ready to explore concrete solutions and consult the right people to set priorities and make recommendations. There was some discussion of potential strategies to better incentivize and offset costs for new attainable housing followed by conversation about a bill in the state Senate (SB538), commonly referred to as the HOMEnibus Bill, which would allow cities and towns to adopt “inclusionary zoning” policies that would require that all new housing contain a certain percentage of workforce or affordable housing. We went over some of the definitions of Housing terms.

Ryan Pope reported that Dover has been awarded two grants totaling \$560,000 in unrestricted funds for the purpose of furthering the aims of the Housing Committee and the City of Dover toward expanding and diversifying our stock of housing available to the unhoused, hard-to-house and Workforce Housing. It was suggested that we discuss recommendations to add a section on Housing policy to our Master Plan, to define and specify where an emergency shelter might be built in the City, to continue to incorporate legislation that will modify zoning regulations to allow landlord and builder incentives for continued housing expansion, and develop incentives for builders and landlords to offer housing specifically to those in need, including possible tax breaks. There was discussion of potential ways to protect tenants from rent increases that could lead to instances of homelessness or housing insecurity. In addition, there was an expressed need to identify the causes of homelessness in our community and better understand available services to assist residents at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness. Another identified need was for affordable homes for purchase for those just starting out, older residents interested in downsizing, and better accommodations for the handicapped and elderly. There is a need also for Medical Respite beds for homeless residents and a need to identify barriers and solutions to improve on the successes of the existing programs such as HUD vouchers. The Committee discussed the need for more local data in order to set priorities for Housing in the city, which will be discussed further at the next meeting when a member of the Strafford Regional Planning Commission discusses the scope of the project currently under way. Another barrier that was cited was the lack of available, buildable land in the City, especially in the downtown area near jobs and critical services and a need for expanded bus service. The Housing Committee also discussed setting a regular recurring meeting schedule for subcommittee work.

The Committee was unable to dedicate enough time to the work group and goal setting discussion. Betsey moved that Krysta proceed with drafting the initial Committee Report so the group had a starting point to build from. The group concurred and Krysta agreed to work on it between the meetings. Work Group preferences were discussed and will be compiled and finalized by Ryan before the next meeting.

6. ADJOURN Motion to adjourn by Betsey Andrews Parker, seconded by Krysta Gingue.

The Housing Committee’s next meeting will be held in the Council Conference Room on Thursday, March 28th, 2024 at 5:30 PM.