

Montpelier Housing Task Force

Meeting Minutes

February 21, 2019

5:15 p.m.-7:00 P.M.

City Council Chambers

Members Present:

Tyler Maas (Vermont State Housing Authority)

Richard Williams (Vermont State Housing Authority)

Jo Ann Troiano

Mary Alice Bisbee

Jim Libby

Marty Roberts

Liz Genge

Laura Gebhart

Kevin Casey (Staff)

Jennifer Hollar (Co-Chair)

Jack McCullough (Council Representative)

1. Introductions and Approval of the Agenda

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

2. Approval of Minutes of December 13th and January 19th meetings

Jack moved to approve the minutes, all approved

3. Public Comment-

No Public Comment

4. Update on MHTF in City Budget

Jack McCullough provided an update and \$110,000 was approved by council for the Housing Trust Fund for the next Fiscal Year.

5. Loan Funds Restructuring Request to Council

Council approved request to reorganize loan funds. Housing Task Force will be asked to develop new guidelines. Further discussion will be needed, and will likely need a subcommittee formed to develop the guidelines.

6. Proposed Fair Housing Language for Trust Fund Guidelines

Proposed Amendments to Housing Trust Fund Guidelines to incorporate anti-discrimination/fair housing language (sent via email to HTF members prior to meeting):

Amend Goals Section 101 (a) to add:

“Address disparities in housing opportunity and promote inclusive and welcoming neighborhoods.”

Amend Definitions Section 102 to add:

“**Protected classes:** Protected classes are defined by the federal Fair Housing Act as those classes of individuals protected from discrimination in housing-related transactions, including advertising, based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, and familial status. Additional protections under Vermont law are based on age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and receipt of public assistance.”

Amend Priorities for Funding Section 106 to add an 8th priority:

“Projects that increase housing opportunities for those in federally and state defined “protected classes” and that foster inclusive and affordable communities.”

*Liz Genge asked that the Housing Task Force consider language on **how** we address “disparities in housing”. She offered a suggestion. Jim was concerned that it would be difficult to enforce. Because it would require further discussion and because Polly was not able to attend and she was the author of the suggested language, Jen suggested the Task Force push this item to a future meeting when Polly can attend.*

7. Energy Standards and Proposed Charter Change

In interests of time and because there were guests to discuss the ADU program, Jen requested that this issue be addressed at another meeting.

8. Accessory Dwelling Units Pilot Program

Tyler Maas of VSHA presented the concept of the Montpelier Accessory Dwelling Program (MADUP). The proposed pilot program is based on the work of Byron Stookey who started the program through the Brattleboro Area Affordable Housing (BAAH). The program in Brattleboro has created more than 50 units using only volunteers. Tyler has been volunteering his services to this program for the past 5 years.

The City will sponsor an application to the Vermont Community Development Programs (VCDP) for Community Development Block Grant Funds (CDBG) to fund the program whose project goal is to assist homeowners in adding ADU's to their homes. The homeowners will be assisted in the form of a grant which will reimburse the homeowner up to \$30,000 upon completion of the ADU. In order to qualify either the homeowner or the tenant must be income eligible (under 80% AMI), and the unit must be affordable for at least 5 years.

VSHA Executive Director Richard Williams mentions that in the interest of full disclosure Jo Ann Troiano is on the board of VSHA.

Mr. Williams also mentioned that VSHA is very supportive of the creation of the ADU pilot program and it is redirecting an existing Revolving Loan Fund (identified as former "enable" funds). VSHA is committing \$100,000 to the creation of the program.

Kevin mentioned that the City will utilize \$50,000 from its existing RLF toward the program. This is possible now that the council has authorized the reorganization of the revolving loan funds. This program is similar to Montpelier's One More Home Program except that it will have a larger award

Jack asked about the total budget (\$532,000) and how many units will be created with the pilot program. Tyler mentioned that in the interests of the grant that we will achieve 10 units over the 2 year pilot program.

Jim asked about where staffing is located for the program? Tyler mentioned that this was one of reasons that Montpelier was selected for the pilot. VSHA is located on Prospect Street in Montpelier and this will allow VSHA staff and/or program director to closely monitor the program and provide the technical support critical to manage a successful program.

Jo asked what changes will be needed to make sure the program is successful and not a repeat of the One More Home program. Kevin mentioned that his understanding of why the 2007-2008 program was unsuccessful was that the award was too small to make it attractive to add an affordable unit on to a home. The previous award was only \$4500, and this was ostensibly to offset the cost of a sprinkler system. This new program will be tailored to make sure that administrative barriers and program guidelines will not be overly cumbersome for the homeowner.

It was noted that staff capacity will be needed for the program to be successful and that this proposal provides that capacity by Tyler through VSHA.

Jen asked if there would be sufficient funds from the loan program restructuring to also support the Franklin Square Condominium restructuring proposal, when it is submitted to the City. Kevin confirmed that there was.

Jim Libby made a motion that the Housing Task Force is supportive of the CDBG application to VCDP. Jo Ann seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The Task Force further agreed

that the City's support of the pilot program should be conditioned on owners committing to use the new units for permanent rentals, not short-term rentals.

9. Short Term Rentals - Tax Department Report

Link to VT Department of Taxes Report on Short Term Rentals:

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/Report-on-Act-10-Relating-to-Short-Term-Rentals.pdf>

This item will be discussed in greater detail at a future meeting. However it was noted that the report identified 230 active hosts in the City of Montpelier, which is a significant number, the fourth highest in the state behind Burlington, Rutland, and Stowe.

10. General Announcements and Updates

In regard to the presentation that was presented at the January meeting of the housing Task Force Jim made a motion to support Franklin Square I and Franklin Square II Mary Alice Seconded, all approved.

11. Agenda Items for March meeting

*Short Term Rentals
Fair Housing Language
Guidelines for Reorganized Housing RLF
Energy Standards and Proposed Charter Change*

12. Adjourn

Meeting Adjourned at 7:00 p.m.