

Montpelier Housing Task Force

Meeting Minutes

March 22

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

City Council Chambers

Members Present:

Jo Ann Troiano

Mary Alice Bisbee

Marty Roberts

Liz Genge

Kevin Casey (Staff)

Polly Nichol (Co-Chair)

Brian Evans

Andrew Sullivan

Jack McCullough (Council Representative)

Also in attendance:

Mayor Anne Watson

Paul Markowitz (Energy Action Committee)

Kate Stephenson (Energy Action Committee)

1. Introductions and Approval of the Agenda

Meeting Called to Order at 5:15 p.m.

Polly added an item, to recommend 2 members of the Housing Task Force to sit on the Housing Trust Fund Committee.

Andrew Sullivan joined the Housing Task Force

2. Approval of Minutes from the February 21 2019 meeting

Liz made a motion to approve Jack seconded

Approval of the minutes, all members approved.

3. Public Comment & Announcements

No members of the public present.

Liz reported that the Housing Needs Assessment for Sober living Recovery Housing was completed and presented at a press conference with the governor today. The report will be available online.

4. Housing Trust Fund Committee Appointments

Brian Evans and Mary Hooper were nominated.

Jo Ann made a motion to approve, Liz seconded. All members approved by voice vote. The recommendations will be forwarded to City Council for approval.

5. Open Meeting Law

Kevin reviewed the notes from the VLCT Open Meeting Law presentation. The Task Force had a few questions that will need to be answered:

- a. Are discussion chains on email subject to open meeting if they are discussing general topics of interest rather than a specific action that is being proposed. For example, is a discussion about the impact of AirBnb on the rental market a discussion that can only occur in a public setting?
- b. Subcommittees are subject to open meeting law. Is this also true of a working group that is communicating around the development of a draft policy which will then be discussed in an open meeting such as at the next Housing Task Force meeting, and then subsequently City Council?

6. **Report from the Statehouse by Jen Hollar:** Jen was not able to attend the meeting, update to be provided at the next meeting.

7. 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):

*Liz Genge asked at the February 21st meeting that the Housing Task Force consider language on **how** we address "disparities in housing". Liz forwarded her amendment to the proposed language to include the following:*

Amend Goals Section 101 (a) to add:

"Address disparities in housing opportunity by promoting inclusive and welcoming neighborhoods."

Amend Objectives

To add after Provide information and guidance to prospective applicants about how they may apply for assistance....in a manner in which affirmatively markets equal housing opportunities The housing increases opportunities for those in federally and state defined "protected classes" and that foster inclusive and affordable communities."

The HTF discussed the proposed language and agreed that it would be appropriate to have Liz final minor edits and then forward on to City Council for review.

Mary Alice made a motion to approve and Brian seconded.

8. Energy Standards and Proposed Charter Change

Kate Stephenson, Chair of the Montpelier Energy Action Committee (MEAC), Paul Markowitz (MEAC), and Mayor Anne Watson were present to discuss what potential policies may come out of the Charter change language approved at Town Meeting Day.

Paul Markowitz discussed the “Split Incentive “in the Rental Market around energy efficiency whereby the renter has no incentive to make energy improvements to the property since they don’t own it and the owner has little incentive because if they don’t pay heat and energy efficiency improvements would be a hit on the bottom line.

Polly is concerned on what the impact will be on the rental market, how these will be enforced.

Mayor Watson mentioned that there might be three different policies that might arise out of this charter change. However, she said these discussions are in the early stages and much more discussion and public input will be needed before any of these policies are enacted or changed. A few suggestions that have been discussed by MEAC include:

- a. An ordinance that prior to sale all multi-family units must meet the State’s energy code.
- b. All homes sales will require a home energy profile to be completed and presented to the buyer
- c. An ordinance based on the Burlington model that addresses the Split incentive (discussed by Paul Markowitz) whereby the City would require that the Landlord must pay heat for the rental unit unless the multi-family building meets the state energy code.

Liz asked about the difference between an energy profile and an energy audit. Anne explained that the Energy Profile has some of the same elements of the audit however, generally no blower door test is completed and is not quite as thorough and comprehensive as a full audit.

Polly asked about the next steps in the process and reiterated that the Task Force would like to be involved in the discussions.

Mayor Watson outlined the likely process:

- i. A series of Public Forums to start the public conversation.
- ii. Identify the needs in the community around energy efficiency
- iii. Develop some policy proposals to address these needs
- iv. Go back to the public for comments and feedback

The mayor was clear that she wants this to be an iterative process with significant public input and feedback. Mayor Watson also noted that Richard Fasey is currently collecting data on programs and policies from around the country to determine what has and what has not been successful. Phoebe Howe of Efficiency Vermont is working with Montpelier landlords to let them know what kind of resources are available

Polly asked if MEAC would be willing to come back to a future meeting and Kate and Paul affirmed that they would.

9. April Meeting:

Polly, Brian, Kevin, and Jen will not be available to meet in April due to school break/vacations etc., The HTF agreed that the next meeting will be on the Thursday May 16th.

10. Possible Agenda Items for May meeting

Short Term Rentals & AirBnb

Point in Time Homeless Count should be completed by then

Discuss the Montpelier Housing Market

Discussions with Developers on existing market barriers and conditions

Guidelines for Reorganized Housing RLF Draft should be complete and ready for HTF review

Recovery Housing Report -Liz

Jack to update the HTF on City Council priorities following their April goals and priorities retreat

Update on Rental Inspection discussion

11. Adjourn

Meeting Adjourned at 7:00 p.m.