

Housing Committee Minutes

February 13, 2023

Members Present: Amanda Gourgue, Katrin Kasper, Caren Rossi, Andy Robertson, Nick Taylor, Sally Cedarholm, Deb Sugerman, Wayne Lehman, Cary Brown.

Meeting called to order at 12:03PM by chair Amanda Gourgue.

C. Rossi moved to accept the minutes of the previous meeting, K. Kasper seconded. There was a unanimous vote to accept the minutes.

There was discussion of plans for a “1 pager” or brochure about the housing landscape in Lee and the potential benefits from loosening attached dwelling unit regulations. C. Rossi noted that this would not be on the warrant until next year so there was time to work on creation and content. K. Kasper inquired as to what the group specifically wanted to educate residents about? There was general consensus that lack of work force housing is a focal point. N. Taylor felt the group should work to provide residents with the basic facts about how housing availability and cost have changed in recent years. D. Sugarman recommended a strategy of moving forward in stages from general to specific. W. Lehman concurred, advising that the group start with the overall big picture and then hone in on needs specific to Lee. K. Kasper agreed, pointing out that there are “NH needs” and “Lee needs”.

S. Cedarholm suggested starting the campaign sooner rather than later and floated “Housing Updates in Lee” as a theme for the outreach effort. C. Rossi and N. Taylor referenced the recent handout from the Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast as a good reference piece whose format could be adapted to a Lee specific piece.

(There was a significant lull in the conversation for a period of time while members looked for information that might prove useful on their cell phones...)

Hearty conversation resumed and it was decided that members would provide information at the upcoming voting session in March. It was agreed that there should be a handout, perhaps poster(s), and a suggestion box or large sheets of paper where people could offer housing suggestions and thoughts. N. Taylor endorsed the plan saying that later, when the Planning Board applies for HOP grants, it's always good to provide evidence of community interaction and outreach.

There was discussion of creating Lee Housing website. There was discussion about finding an average Lee home value that didn't include manufactured housing, N. Taylor advised the SRPC had a town by town report with average values recently. He also thought manufactured housing should be included in the average.

There was discussion of what constitutes workforce housing, A. Robertson said that often town employees are used as a bellwether for whether a community has workforce housing, he noted that the majority of Lee's municipal employees own homes in Lee or immediate surrounding communities with similar housing prices, adding that age may effect this, noting some younger, new employees are living farther afield, Berwick, ME for example seems popular.

N. Taylor stated that the NH Assoc. of Realtors provides updated information by community.

C. Brown questioned the last paragraph of the WHC handout noting that the characterization of zoning seemed subjective to him. N Taylor advised that the group could edit and chop up the handout as they saw fit.

N Taylor told the group that there was a 179 page data report coming from SRPC, K Kasper was familiar with the report and noted that it hadn't been finalized yet.

A Gourgue turned the discussion to next steps. It was re-affirmed that the group should have a presence at the upcoming elections. Members will work on collecting stats, have a handout available and schedule members to take shifts handing out the handout and engaging in discussion. A Robertson advised that the group should speak with moderator Don Quigley as to where they could set up camp, positioning is ultimately up to Don.

S Cedarholm mentioned that the group should have a booth or table at the Lee Farmers Markets and encouraged C Rossi to include space for other non-profits as well. C Rossi thought this was a good suggestion.

A Gourgue noted that N Taylor was on the agenda to discuss his recent visit with the Planning Board. N Taylor said he had met with the Planning Board and presented a 3 phase approach to reviewing planning and zoning regs and policy; "Identify, Audit, Develop" comprised the 3 phases. These 3 phases would translate specifically to applying for an audit grant, conducting an audit of planning and zoning policies in Lee, and then looking for development grant money. W. Lehman added that the planning board is finalizing their revised site plan review policy at the moment, should wrap this up in March, and can then can move onto the 3 phase process.

C Rossi proposed letting the Planning Board finalize their grant application(s), focus on ADUs, do their homework, make recommendations, and go from there. This could limit the need for unnecessary future Housing Committee meetings.

W. Lehman feels the Housing Committee should have at least one more meeting.

N. Taylor advised that the Planning Board will apply for a \$50,000 audit grant and then a \$100,000 developmental grant. K Kasper sees the Housing Committee's role as being the "PR agent" for Planning and Zoning plans.

It was decided that the next meeting will be the 2nd or 3rd Monday in April.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50PM on a motion by C. Rossi with a second from D. Sugerman and a unanimous vote in favor of adjournment.

Minutes compiled and submitted by A. Robertson