

Approved as written
Affordable Housing Committee Minutes
April 12, 2022
8:30am
93 Narragansett Avenue
Jamestown, RI 02835

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 am and the following members were present:

Joe Cannon, Fred Pease, Job Toll, Quaker Case, Mike Liebhauser, Nick Radesca, Bob Plain, Mary Meagher, Lisa Bryer

Also present: Carrie Kolb

II. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from the March 15, 2022 meeting as written was moved by Liebhauser and seconded by Cannon. So unanimously voted, with Pease recusing himself as he did not attend that meeting.

III. 91 Carr Lane – 3 lot Subdivision, Comprehensive permit for Affordable Housing, Master Plan – review, discussion, and/or action and/or vote

A. Letter of Support – review, discussion, and/or action and/or vote

Background of 91 Carr Lane

Plain stated that he and Case attended March 16, 2022 Planning Commission meeting where the pre-application of 91 Carr Lane was submitted. Plain spoke during public comment and read into the record an article he had written and published in Jamestown Press on 3/19/21.

Plain asked what the next steps are for 91 Carr Lane? Kolb explained the CCHC is the applicant and they have submitted a Master Plan application that will be discussed at the 7:00pm, April 20, 2022 Planning Commission meeting, which is a public hearing and it was published in the Jamestown Press on April 7, 2022. The abutters within 300 feet have all been notified. We have solicited written comment from the agencies. The Planning Commission will be sitting as the Local Review Board for this application.

Kolb told Liebhauser that she printed his written correspondence and gave to the Planning Commission at the March 16th meeting. Members are encouraged to write a personal email or letter supporting the project and emailing it to Kolb by Thursday morning of this week at the latest. Plain encouraged committee members attend this meeting if they want to provide comments for or against. Kolb stated she will email a reminder.

Discussion about draft letter to Planning Commission was discussed and finalized.

Liebhauser moved and Case seconded based on the discussion of today that Plain will compile the edits of draft letter and send to Planning Commission. All in favor

IV. Jamestown Community Housing Land Trust update - review, discussion, and/or action and/or vote

Meagher stated that Town Council has authorized \$25,000 to affordable housing budget to start the program for creating an affordable housing land trust. The Town Solicitor is looking at this. Questions were raised: who is the entity that is monitoring? Will the CCHC, the Town or Town Land Trust? The answer is not clear at this time.

Case asked if it includes the capacity to build auxiliary housing? Meagher stated that that needs to be a test case. Mary stated that she imagines that there would be advertisement in the paper for people to apply but criteria has to be created first. She thinks that they will get applications. Meagher stated she envisions CCHC, Affordable Housing and Town will all work together in some form.

Discussion ensued about forming a Land Trust. A land trust is a legal entity that will own at least one piece of land. Coventry and East Greenwich have municipal land trust committees and they do the business of the land trust. Land Trust could be a non-government organization. We should come up with some pros and cons of the different models and give a recommendation to the Town Council. CCHC also has a land trust.

Liebhauser would like discussing the Land Trust to be an agenda item. The committee can look at the different ways that this can be run and what the eligibility criteria for applicants are? Radesca says that the purpose of a Land Trust is to promote affordable housing. We should be involved.

Liebhauser stated that the funding is a step forward.

V. Real estate conveyance tax/dedicated funding source for affordable housing projects – review, discussion, and/or action and/or vote

Plain stated that the Affordable Housing budget did not increase to \$225,000 as requested. But we did get level funded. The Town Councilors agree with the ask (it was just a tough year for the budget). Radesca stated that we will have another year of real estate conveyance tax data to bring to the Town next year.

VI. Tools and Techniques for Creating Affordable Housing in Jamestown – review, discussion, and/or action and/or vote

- A. Accessory apartment ordinance – review, discussion and/or action and/or vote
- B. Cottage clusters

Plain stated that this is the part of the meeting where the committee can talk about ideas for affordable housing.

Plain stated that this is the part of the agenda where both big or little picture items can be discussed. The items for discussion do have to be listed on the agenda.

Cannon would like to have a session where we talk about the people who need to be served, how to be served and what programs can be put together to help serve the people. We need to look affordable housing to meet with the state requirements. Cannon gives an example of more older women are selling homes and leaving the island, that means that one more house is being sold. How do we come up with programs to get people to stay and create more affordable housing? Cannon will bring a partial list of ideas to the next meeting.

Cannon brings up that there are a number of people live in 3-4 bedroom homes alone. How do you get affordable housing credit by renting a room in your house? Plain stated that the rules are that a person must qualify based on income and there needs to be a public subsidy. Bryer stated that there also needs to be a 30 –year deed restriction. Plain gives an example of how a tax break is given to veterans. Bryer stated that she has been a shift across the county in the mindset of affordable housing. There are things that can be done to increase the affordability and it’s the difference between the big “A” and little “a”. Renting rooms could be a tool or technique that is advocated for creating more affordable housing, but it doesn’t count towards 10% for the State. Radesca stated that the problem we are here to address is at its core a market problem. Trying to fix the problem with just government intervention and public housing works is an ineffective solution. The housing market needs to be made fairer, more open and capable to meet the demands. On the next agenda, talk about the State of Rhode Island Bill 2022 – H 7942.

VII. Future meetings and agenda items for Affordable Housing Committee

The next meeting is May 17th at 12 noon.

VIII. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn at 10:00am was moved by Radesca and seconded by Pease. All in favor.

Attest

Lisa Bryer and Carrie Kolb
Town Planner Planning Assistant