

Approved as written

Jamestown Affordable Housing

Committee Meeting

May 17, 2022

12:00 p.m.

93 Narragansett Ave.

Jamestown RI 02835

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:00pm and the following members were present:

Joe Cannon, Fred Pease, Job Toll, Mike Liebhauser, Nick Radesca, Quaker Case,

Mary Meagher, Lisa Bryer

Also present: Carrie Kolb

Not Present: Bob Plain

II. Approval of Minutes April 12, 2022 - review, discussion and/or action and/or vote

A motion to approve the minutes from April 12, 2022 meeting as written was moved by Pease and seconded by Radesca. So unanimously voted.

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

A. Letter sent to Planning Commission

The Master Plan application of 91 Carr Lane is on the agenda for the May 18th Planning Commission meeting, continued from the April 20th meeting.

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

A. Admin models:

Discussion ensued regarding the different types of administration models. Meagher stated that the Town Council doesn't need to be in charge and Bryer agreed with her. Bryer stated that

because there is a fiduciary responsibility of this “new board”, the Land Trust should be an entity with appointed members and the Town Council should have a seat at the table. Radesca stated that someone from the Affordable Housing Committee should serve on the Land Trust Board. Liebhauser stated that a non-profit, that is not a municipal body, would have a higher degree of focus. Meagher sees a Board of Directors working together with CCHC. After further discussion, this committee will make a recommendation to the Town Council who will make the decisions.

A Land Trust is a very specific way of administering affordable housing. The town can allow a low-income family to establish equity and home ownership without owning the land. It will be important to make sure that the Board of Directors has a space for LMI homeowners and make sure they have a voice.

Case asked about the town properties that the Town owns (198 of them) and how many are vacant or buildable? Does the data exist? Discussion ensued regarding finding space and/or finding developed lots to repurpose for affordable housing.

B. Pros and Cons – to be discussed at a future meeting.

C. Applicant criteria

Many different points were discussed.

- The Town doesn't have specific salary information on its residents, so how many people could qualify is unknown
- Is income the only piece used for criteria? Do you look at a person's assets as well?
- Can we look outside the HUD criteria?
- What percentage of AMI should be used? CCHC uses 80% and the Town allows up to 120%?
- What average household income should be used? The median income in Jamestown is \$119,375. The HUD median income is \$78,080 (for a family of 2 at 100%).

Radesca gave a scenario: what if a couple qualifies in terms of income. They have a house and land valued at \$500,000 and the land to the Land Trust at \$250,000. Do they still qualify? Bryer answered its her understanding that only income is used as criteria but we need to check on that.

Further discussion is needed at a future meeting.

V. Accessory Dwelling Unit and Multifamily Zoning - review, discussion and/or action and/or vote

- A. Review & Discussion: State of Rhode Island Bill 2022 - H 7942
(Distributed at April 12th meeting)

Liebhauser believes that AHC should recommend changes to the Town Council:

1. Enact the zoning changes regardless if Bill 2022-H7942 passes
2. Removal of single-family home zoning

Discussion ensued and the limitation of water was brought up and how do we increase density with this issue at the forefront. The example of 63 Conanicus Avenue was brought up. The old building was where 5 apartments with 6 bedrooms and the new building is 10 bedrooms. Whenever a larger project comes up people discuss water. Liebhauser asked if the Town has the ability to regulate development based on water use? Bryer stated “no”. Liebhauser asked how much water usage is the job of AHC? Toll stated if you don’t address water, then a proposal will not move forward.

Radesca stated that if H 7942 passes, then the zoning changes get made and the Town doesn’t have to do anything. Discussion ensued regarding removing zoning restrictions to multiple houses on one lot. Toll feels that if you take away restrictions then people will turn their properties into Airbnb. Liebhauser suggests that the Town should incentivize turning accessory units into affordable housing and the town should reduce the tax burden. Short term rentals should be taxed at a higher tax rate and those tax dollars should help fund the Land Trust in a two-prong approach. Meagher brings up that Jamestown has the same tax rate for residential and commercial. Bryer stated an impact fee may be considered and that would take it out of the tax structure. Liebhauser states that the AHC should lead the way: 1. ADFU can be used in any way and not restricted them; 2. Make that the case for multi-family housing; 3. Short term rentals and water issues – let’s bring that issue to the surface. Cannon states the responsibility of this committee is affordable housing and we can’t usurp other boards like Zoning.

- B. Review Housing Bills Introduced at State House:
https://www.rilegislature.gov/pressrelease/_layouts/15/ril.pressrelease.inputform/DisplayForm.aspx?List=c8baae31-3c10-431c-8dcd-9dbbe21ce3e9&ID=372408

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 cluster

To be discussed at a future meeting

VII. Member Reports

- A. Partial list of ideas for programs, by Joe Cannon

Cannon states that AHC has only been looking at “purchase”. He asked about the overall strategy for affordable housing. Meagher responded that Housing Works RI talks about the housing stock in Jamestown and that it’s a requirement by RI State Law that each town have 10% affordable housing. Bryer stated that the Comprehensive Plan has an affordable housing element with a detailed housing plan and strategy by year and we should not reinvent the wheel but add onto the existing format. Pease asked if you can get to the 10% without using HUD. Byer explained that if you don’t use HUD methodology then affordable units do not get counted, and she gives an example.

B. Other comments, updates, shares, and information - none

VIII. Future meetings and agenda items of Affordable Housing Committee

The next meeting is June 14th. Time to be determined.

IX. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn at 1:47pm was moved by Pease and seconded by Cannon. All in favor.

Attest

Lisa Bryer and Carrie Kolb
Town Planner Planning Assistant