

Approved as written

Affordable Housing Committee Minutes

March 15, 2022

8:30 a.m.

93 Narragansett Ave.

Jamestown RI 02835

THIS MEETING WAS TELECONFERENCED VIA ZOOM

Meeting ID: 857 9398 1318

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:36 am and the following members were present: Joe Cannon, Job Toll, Quaker Case, Mike Liebhauser, Nick Radesca, Bob Plain, Mary Meagher

Also present: Lisa Bryer, Carrie Kolb

Not present: Fred Pease

II. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from the February 7, 2022 subcommittee meeting as written was made by Case and seconded by Toll. So unanimously voted.

A motion to approve the minutes from the February 14, 2022 meeting as written was made by Case and seconded by Liebhauser. So unanimously voted.

A motion to approve the minutes from the February 16, 2022 meeting as written was made by Case and seconded by Cannon. So unanimously voted.

III. Real estate conveyance tax / dedicated funding source for affordable housing projects

a. Letter to Town Council – recap and next steps

Plain gave a presentation to the Town Council at the February 23rd meeting, asking to increase the annual allocation to the Annual Housing Trust Fund and using the real estate conveyance tax to set a new funding formula. He felt it was a good presentation, and there was no discussion. However, the School Department was asking for an increase in their budget at the same meeting. The Town Council talked about Affordable Housing Committee at a subsequent meeting. Councilwoman Meagher gave a great endorsement of AHC proposal. Councilman Randy White questioned why there needed to be a law?

Plain stated that he left a message for White asking to speak with him. Discussion ensued regarding the importance of creating a law/ordinance that will provide consistent funding for Affordable Housing for years to come.

Plain advocated each member connecting with a member of the Town Council to discuss the AHC proposal and answer any questions. He would also like each member to reach out to five people to form a coalition, who will write to Town Council members and attend meetings to advocate. Economic diversity of Jamestown is great talking point.

Liebhauser –Erik Brine

Case – Nancy Beye

Plain – Randy White and Mike White

IV. 91 Carr Lane – 3 lot Subdivision, Comprehensive permit for Affordable Housing, Pre-Application

a. Letter of Support

The applicant CCHC was invited to attend and present the project and the Executive Director, Christian Belden was not able to attend. Bryer explained that she represents the Town of Jamestown as the owner of 91 Carr Lane and the town has hired a planner to advise the Planning Commission throughout process.

The project was discussed by the Committee. Based on the information submitted, it was understood that they are being reviewed as a comprehensive permit for affordable housing, where the Planning Commission will be granting all of the planning and zoning approvals. They will be at the Planning Commission for pre-application. The Land Trust objected to the project and for that reason, it has been scaled back from six units. Now its two affordable units that are for sale. The existing house and garage will be sold and the proceeds will fund the project. The pre-application stage is where advice is given to the applicant from the Planning Commission.

Plain stated that he will be attending the meeting on March 16th. He would like the AHC to write a formal letter to the Planning Commission why we support the project and a draft will be written by the next meeting to review and approve.

Meagher recommended writing to the Conservation Commission because the land was bought by the Town of Jamestown for both watershed and affordable housing. The watershed has already been protected.

Toll stated that the Land Trust is vehemently opposed to this project. It has to do with the watershed. They are convinced it's in danger.

Liebhauser stated that the AHC should focus its efforts where it will work.

Discussion had regarding Conservation Commission. Do we attend their meetings or invite them to ours? It was decided that AHC should attend a Conservation Commission meeting and have one representative speak with a focused message instead of seven people.

Plain – The Land Trust has a very weak case. Facts and Law are on “our” side. He will write letters to the editor for the newspaper in support, attend meetings and help deliver this project to the community of Jamestown.

Cannon questioned if supporting 91 Carr Lane will hurt chances of getting increased funding? Plain stated that we can support both. Liebhauser stated that we can't shy away from an affordable housing project. The discourse around 91 Carr Lane is about the watershed, not discourse for affordable housing. Cannon brought up that Carr Lane has lots of small lots that do not fit the zoning regulations.

Plain will draft a letter of support for review at the next meeting that will be sent to the Planning Commission. The letter will include how the proposal has changed in response to the previous pre-application submitted.

V. Jamestown Community Land Trust

Meagher brought up, during a Town Council budget meeting, the idea of asking for more money for affordable housing and part of it would be used for the purpose of buying the development rights. She is giving a presentation to Town Council on March 21st regarding getting a pilot program started. Meagher stated that she emailed the town finance director to get figures on how much money the town has spent purchasing land for open space. The commitment to buying land for open space has made property less affordable. She said let's make the same commitment to community housing and building housing that is affordable. She would like the support of the Affordable Housing Committee. Plain stated that we fully the concept of purchasing development rights and forming a land trust to buy development rights.

A motion was made by Plain and seconded by Liebhauser that the Affordable Housing Committee fully endorse the concept of purchasing development rights or partnering with island home owners to form housing land trust trust fund to preserve economic diversity in Jamestown.

Discussion ensued and Plain stated that the Block Island chair of the Affordable Housing Committee really likes this idea. Plain stated it's a brilliant idea. All in favor. So unanimously voted.

VI. Discussion of Accessory apartment ordinance – Ordinance proposal

No discussion at this time.

VII. Tools and Techniques for Creating Affordable Housing in Jamestown –

No discussion at this time.

VIII. Future meetings and agenda items of Affordable Housing Committee

Next meeting is scheduled for April 12, 2022 at 8:30am.

IX. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn at 10:00am moved by Plain and seconded by Liebhauser. So unanimously voted.

Attest:

Lisa Bryer and Carrie Kolb
Town Planner Planning Assistant