

Approved as written

Jamestown Affordable Housing Committee Minutes

September 7, 2022
9:00 a.m.
93 Narragansett Ave.
Jamestown RI 02835

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:00am and the following members were present:
Job Toll, Fred Pease, Joe Cannon, Bob Plain, Quaker Case, Lisa Bryer and Mary Meagher.
Greg DiGasper – joined at 9:43am
Also present: Carrie Kolb
Not present: Mike Liebhauser

Plain informed the committee that Nick Radesca had resigned because he is moving to College Hill in Providence.

II. Approval of Minutes August 1, 2022 and August 15, 2022- review, discussion and/or action and/or vote

A motion to approve the minutes from August 1, 2022 meeting and August 15, 2022 field trip as written was moved by Case and seconded by Pease.
Discussion: members have read and familiarized themselves with the record(s) of the meeting(s) if they did not attend.
All in favor. So unanimously voted.

III. Executive Session

1. Town-owned land - Review, discussion and/or action and/or vote

A motion to enter into Executive Session at 9:07am was moved by Pease and seconded by Toll.
All in favor.

IV. Adjournment of Executive Session

A motion to adjourn Executive Session at 9:43am was moved by Pease and seconded by Case. All in favor.

A motion to seal the minutes from Executive Session was moved by Pease and seconded by Case. All in Favor.

There were no votes taken during Executive Session.

V. Community Land Trust - Update

Meagher stated that she, Bryer, Town Solicitor and CCHC are meeting this afternoon to discuss. She is hoping to get one or two projects going. Plain is excited that it will be an effort that the committee can work on. Meagher stated that it may take time, but the Town needs to create affordable housing that doesn't scare people.

VI. Rentals & Accessory Dwelling Units - review, discussion and/or action and/or vote

1. Short term rentals and ADUs
2. Year-round rentals

Meagher said that the Town solicitor gave an update on recent legislation at the Town Council meeting on 9-6-22. Meagher said that the state law on ADUs is really badly written. Town Solicitor was helpful in saying, if you allow ADUs, here are all the things that you cannot do. And he noted that communities do not have to allow ADUs. Meagher said that Accessory Family Dwelling Units (AFDUs) are out the window. The local ordinance needs to be re-written. A letter from the committee to the Town Council would be welcome.

Plain asked how to we move this forward? Meagher recognized the recent legislation has opened up the possibility by which ADUs can be granted in the town. We urge the Town to approve the presence of ADUs. We urge that STR are not allowed in ADUs.

Bob – ADUs should be used beyond AFDUs, but not be used for short term rentals and as long as there is enough water. Informal straw poll was taken and everyone agrees. Bob will write a letter that supports ADUs, but not to be used for short term rentals. He will send to Kolb, and the letter will be distributed prior to next meeting. At the October meeting the letter can be revised, if needed, and voted upon.

Bryer stated that the Planning Commission will update the zoning ordinance. The Town has a consultant engaged to help us update our ordinances now. The consultant is on-board to help us update the ADU ordinance. Kolb will let the committee know when ADUs are on the agenda for discussion.

VII. Cottage Clusters Field Trip debrief - review, discussion and/or action and/or vote

The field trip was excellent and it was really good to see what a Cottage Cluster looks like. Plain said that Don Powers is a gem and he would like to send him a thank you card signed by the committee. Bryer said that the pictures of the project do not adequately describe it. Cannon said that the photos of the project are almost a negative because it doesn't do it justice. Plain said that East Greenwich only place that has cottage clusters in RI, and he hopes that Jamestown is the next place. Discussion ensued regarding the zoning of cottage clusters. When you put Cottage Clusters in the zoning ordinance, then they do not need a variance to be built because they are an approved use. Both sets of cottage clusters in East Greenwich were built with Comprehensive Permits.

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

Discussion on housing in Jamestown ensued. Plain emailed a document to the committee with housing figures pulled from Department of Commerce: 3159 housing units, owner occupied 2,008 (65%); renter occupied 473 (15%); vacant 678 (21%); affordable housing 116 (3.70%); short term rentals 112 (3.50%). Meagher stated the number for short term rentals is closer to 173. The vacancy number is high because Jamestown has always been a summer destination. Plain stated that Narragansett, South Kingstown and Block Island all have higher vacant house figures. The question was raised, is there a way to incentivize long term rentals? Plain gave the example of how in Germany home owners who rent a house can take it off their taxes.

IX. Member Reports – none

X. Future meetings and agenda items of Affordable Housing Committee

The next meeting will be on October 5th – start at 5:00pm or 5:30pm – the length of the agenda will determine the start time. The meeting will need to adjourn by 6:45pm.

XI. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn at 10:18am was moved by Pease and seconded by Case. All in favor.

Attest:

Lisa Bryer and Carrie Kolb
Town Planner Planning Assistant