

Approved as amended
Jamestown Affordable Housing Committee Minutes
September 20, 2023
5:15pm
Small Conference Room
93 Narragansett Avenue,
Jamestown, RI 02835

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:15pm and the following members were present: Bob Plain, Fred Pease, Wayne Moore, Quaker Case, Dave Pritchard, Job Toll and Lisa Bryer. Also present: Carrie Kolb and Richard Doyle and Susan Barker
Not present: Susan Gorelick, Mary Meagher

II. Approval of Minutes

1. August 16, 2023 - review, discussion and/or action and/or vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the August 16, 2023 meeting as written was moved by Pease and seconded by Toll. All in favor

III. Accessory Dwelling Units (15 min) Review, discussion, and/or action and/or vote

- a. Review of Planning Commission meeting and next steps

The Town Council will have a workshop and a hearing for the Zoning Ordinance which ADUs are part of. Bob Plain talked about ADUs at the Town Council Meeting and wants make a change to “one of the two dwelling unit has to be owner occupied.” His question is why and what is the public policy good? He thinks they should both be allowed to be rented. Case asked how? Plain said if you can rent both units its good. Case said you have to rent both at an affordable rent for it to be good. Plain said that an economist would say more rentals is good because more rentals there are the more people who can’t afford to own can rent. Pritchard asked about Short-term Rentals (STR)? ADUs can’t be less than one year in our new ordinance. Bryer proposed, if not owner occupied, then the both units (if rented) must be made available for a long-term lease (one year or more).

Discussion ensued regarding outside companies that purchase properties for rentals. They discussed whether we can restrict ownership, and whether people are building for rentals.

Discussion ensued regarding the size of an ADU. Pritchard asked why the size is limited to 800 sq ft. Bryer stated that the State has 700 sq ft and several other towns have 800 sq ft. We do not want to have accessory structures bigger than the main house and limited to one ADU per lot. Plain gave the example of a primary dwelling being 710 sq ft and the ADU being 700 sq ft., with both being small. Plain said that people with smaller homes will most likely not create ADUs.

Hammett Court will have smaller units that are 500 sq ft. Moore said that the Arcade in Providence has units that are 300 sq ft. Case raised the question; how small can a unit be and be a year-round rental?

Pritchard asked why ADUs are not allowed in CD? Bryer reviewed the table. CD allows mixed use by right in CD and that includes residential and commercial/office so there is no need. She does not think an ancillary separate unit behind or beside a commercial or multi-family dwelling seems appropriate. Put it as part of the development plan as part of the existing structure.

Pritchard asked about the Town providing an interest free loan? Plain said that there are more things we can do, including no increased tax on the improvement on ADU if deed restricted. If the ADU is a market rate rental, then the improvement is not subject to an increased tax rate for 5 years in S. Kingstown.

Bob – will draft a letter to the Council that would suggest these small tweaks to the ordinance. He will bring to the next meeting, and then to the Town Council that addresses the following points:

1. ownership
2. size
3. allow in CD district

IV. Hammett Court (10 min) Review, discussion, and/or action and/or vote

- a. Proposed downtown development before the Planning Commission with some market rate units and some units of adults with disabilities. All units are deed restricted and deemed affordable housing. Review, discussion and/or action and/or vote

Bryer explained that the existing commercial building, is proposed to become a 12-unit residential building. Looking Upwards Inc is proposing to use same foot print for 12 units. The units will be for residents with IDD and affordable housing units. All units will be deeded as affordable housing. The Planning Commission meeting tonight (September 20, 2023) is for a Master Plan/Preliminary Public Hearing. The Planning Commission, sitting as the Local Review Board will vote on this issue tonight or at next meeting. The neighbors are concerned with traffic and the applicant did a traffic study. Also drainage and the applicant has proposed a good solution. Plain asked if there is a value to speaking in favor of the project at the hearing? Bryer said yes if the board is in favor of the project. Plain said that Looking Upwards are the best tenants in all the housing projects he works with. The board agreed that every unit we build in Jamestown is one step closer to 10% affordable housing and the project is a great use for the property.

A motion to endorse the project to the planning commission was made and seconded by Pritchard and Case. All in favor. Unanimous.

V. Funding Mechanisms of Affordable Housing - review, discussion and/or action and/or vote (5 min)

a. Discussion on permanent source of funding for affordable housing in Jamestown
Discussion of funding ensued. The Real Estate Transfer tax from the State is collected and 49% of the tax goes to the Town. In Jamestown, those funds are put into the general fund. Plain would like to have a guaranteed portion of real estate transfer tax. He also realizes that that this

year, real estate sales are off. Bryer explained that Jamestown is one of the only Towns that makes a yearly contribution to affordable housing and it has been important gap funding for all affordable housing that has been built.

Pritchard said that he thinks there should be an affordable housing non-profit in Jamestown. Bryer talked about creating an impact fee in Jamestown only for building permits that are over a certain amount of money and the example of \$2,000,000 was given. Plain remembers Mary Meagher talking about a bond for affordable housing.

Bryer said that budget season is coming up. A letter to Town Council would need to be submitted and presented by December. A recommendation was made to send a letter to the Town Council in November that clearly states this is a budget request. Plain said that we can work on this at the next meeting to ask for a percentage of real estate transfer tax to be dedicated to affordable housing. The committees need to get the Town Council's endorsement and/or plant a seed for impact fees that are earmarked for affordable housing. Bryer said that the Town has \$400,000 in a fund for affordable housing that was a Town Warrant. Toll said that the committee has to be able to explain what we want to do with the funding.

- VI. Community Land Trust/Jamestown Sustainable Resident Program-** review, discussion and/or action and/or vote (5 min) – not discussed at this meeting
- VII. Tools and Techniques for Creating Affordable Housing in Jamestown -** review, discussion and/or action and/or vote (5 min) – not discussed at this meeting
- VIII. Member Reports** (5 min) – none at this time
- IX. Future Meetings and agenda items of Affordable housing Committee -** review, discussion and/or action and/or vote (5 min)
The next meeting will be on October 18, 2023 at 5:15pm.

X. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn at 6:21pm was moved by Pritchard and seconded by Moore. All in favor

Attest:

Carrie Kolb