

TOWN OF ESSEX HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, November 5, 2024

Housing Commission (HC): Anna Brouillette (Chair), Lauren Ressue (Vice Chair), Carolyn Ellenberger (Clerk), Rupesh Asher, Deb Flannery (absent)

Administration and Staff: Kent Johnson (Town Planner)

- Call to Order
- Agenda additions/changes
- Public to be heard
- Approval of Minutes
- Business Items
 - Housing Data Review and Discussion
 - Resource Website Development Review and Next Steps
 - Housing Commission Budget Request Discussion
- Membership Updates
- Member Reports
- Adjourn

1. CALL TO ORDER

Anna called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

No changes to the agenda were made.

3. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

There were no members of the public present.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Lauren motioned to approve the October 24, 2024 meeting minutes, Carolyn seconded. The motion passed 4 – 0.

5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

- a. Housing Data Review and Discussion
 - i. Lauren presented calculations of limits for affordable housing amounts per number of people per household
 - ii. Data could be used for future assessment of affordability, e.g. of new housing developments
 - iii. Given the potential need for some unrelated people to reduce housing expenses by sharing a home, consider ways to make housing more conducive to home sharing
 - iv. Lauren will add spreadsheet with calculations to shared folder
- b. Resource Website Development Review and Next Steps
 - i. Carolyn reviewed revised draft proposal that incorporated HC member feedback from October HC meeting, including eliminating redundancy and focusing on housing-related links
 - ii. HC members agreed to proposed reorganization
 - iii. Carolyn and Lauren continue to finalize links
 - iv. **Action:** Carolyn will connect with Brittany McGregor, who can format content for the Essex Town website
- c. Housing Commission Budget Request Discussion
 - i. HC member agreed to submit a request for budget to cover expenses such as conference attendance (local and potentially regional/national), guest speakers, and materials for tabling events
 - ii. In the future, HC members will consider budget expenses such as a consultant to update the housing needs assessment or conduct a statically-valid survey, and will review the HC Charter for ideas on other types of projects within our remit
 - iii. **Action:** Anna will draft an email requesting budget, for review at December HC meeting

6. **MEMBERSHIP UPDATES**

- a. Deb has resigned from the Essex HC and agreed to an advisory role. The HC member vacancy will be advertised.

7. **MEMBER REPORTS**

- a. There were no member reports.

8. AOB

- a. Kent recently attended a conference session about the challenge of apartments being more expensive to build than they will make in profit. A solution could be to build more densely, allowing more building per site. How do Essex Town zoning subdivision regulations (e.g., height, setbacks) compare with adjacent municipalities? Could we ease to allow more building per site to increase economic viability? Anna noted the National Zoning Atlas Project and a Vermont affiliate comparing zoning across communities with a lens for exclusionary practices and those that support development or more housing units.
- b. Kent noted that it's difficult to access census data given the Town/City split. To access census data, Kent can connect HC members with a VT state census support employee who can help obtain requested data
- c. Anna, Rupesh, Kent, and Carolyn will attend the 2024 Vermont Statewide Housing Conference and debrief at December HC meeting

9. ADJOURN

Lauren motioned to adjourn the meeting; Carolyn seconded. The motion passed 4 – 0. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:53 PM.

Minutes submitted by Carolyn Ellenberger, Clerk.