

Town of Richmond
AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE
Minutes of March 19, 2018

Present Were: Holly Knott, Chair
Andrea Baranyk (Planning Board liaison)

Bruce Olean

Also Present: Juliana Berry, Town Planner

Dana Brown

Absent Were: Jennifer Lee

Amanda Perkins

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Chair H. Knott.

B. Approval of Minutes

- 1) Minutes of December 18, 2017

A motion was made by B. Olean, seconded by H. Knott, to approve the minutes of December 18, 2017 as written. All ayes (A. Baranyk abstained due to absence at that meeting).

J. Berry updated the Committee on the unsuccessful attempts to reach J. Lee since December, and that the next step will be a certified return receipt letter and inclusion on a Town Council agenda.

C. Continued Business

- 1) Roundtable discussion of affordable housing in Town, including:
 - Group Homes
 - Community Septic System Loan Program (CSSLP)
 - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

The Committee discussed the recent group home list received from the state, with addresses and number of beds. B. Olean noted that he had been complaining about the low upkeep standards at the group home on Kenyon Hill Trail, and his enduring concern that facilities will become and remain vacant as medical advances improve. J. Berry will follow up with the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals with questions on how many beds are actually filled in Richmond, whether total beds count towards the Town's affordable tally, and if there is a state definition for "group home". The Committee had a related concern regarding seniors and home retention, especially with the high tax rate.

J. Berry explained the background behind the CSSLP, and how the Program will likely go live next week. It will assist financially disadvantaged homeowners to upgrade their septic systems or convert from cesspools, and could benefit overall home retention.

J. Berry let the Committee know that the Housing Rehab application for CDBG is pending contract approval at the state level, and how residential rehabilitation projects are funded now on a case-by-case basis. The annual Project Year 2017 competitive process is about to commence, though it looks like the only sub-recipient to apply to Richmond will be Richmond Ridge for the wellhead in Shannock; it needs funding now that Shannock Falls in Charlestown is requiring water easements.

J. Berry stated that the Special Legislative Commission to Study the LMI Housing Act did meet in January and February, and a presentation from the State Housing Appeals Board (SHAB) shed light on how there can be repercussions to not meeting the state mandate of 10% affordable housing if the municipality's Comprehensive Plan is expired or there is no good-faith effort to achieve that 10% through accepted housing strategies. The next meeting of the Commission should include a report from the South County communities on the unique challenges faced by the coastal rural towns.

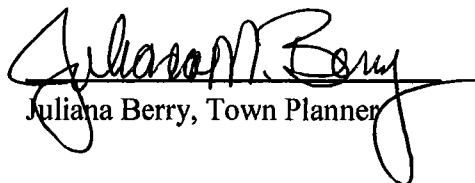
B. Olean said that he will be meeting with the South County branch of the RI Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty tomorrow, along with D. Brown. He encouraged D. Brown to apply to be on the Richmond Committee, especially with J. Lee no longer attending, A. Baranyak with limited available time, and H. Knott probably moving out of Richmond next year.

H. Knott reminded the Committee that the next meeting is June 18th.

D. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned unanimously at 6:59 p.m.

Attested to by:


Juliana Berry, Town Planner