

Minutes of Housing Committee
August 2, 2023
Woodbridge Town Hall Meeting Room

Meeting began at 7:05

In attendance: Donovan Lofters, James Graham, Kathy Hunter, Lewis Shaffer, Elaine Feldman, Miles Katz, Ben Fink (via phone)

1. Approval of July 5, 2023 minutes

Lewis made a motion to accept the minutes, Elaine seconded. Kathy advised that the CUPOP list of town-owned properties is now on the town's website. There will be a segmented list of properties under Category 3 that the Committee will need to assess for possible housing opportunities. This includes the Woodbridge Country Club. Kathy also advised that the date of October 30th for the training on Affordable Housing/Fair Housing Policy has been confirmed and will be held at the JCC at 6:30pm. We will need to work on getting the word out.

2. Public Comment

There were no attendees for Public Comment

3. Providing a report to CUPOP on land use recommendation for WCC

Kathy advised that it's not certain if CUPOP will have a public hearing for the use of the WCC on 8/28 but that a recommendation would be made to them from the Housing Committee which will reiterate the use for housing. Points to bring up includes the fact that the Affordable Housing Plan, approved by the BOS, expressly recommended the use of Town owned property for higher density housing where there was public water/sewer. Also, the Committee would be recommending that the Town build the number of housing units necessary for a moratorium to allow sufficient time to plan other housing developments in the future.

Mary suggests we avoid making a specific recommendation lest we find ourselves in a position that will be difficult to work from—dismissed as prejudiced.

Elaine asks what are the specific problems with the RFP and Kathy reviewed a few of its weaknesses, including that it doesn't actually specify the scope of work.

Want to have a way to market ideas...Jim says we need someone with charisma and vision to lead.

Example to show: Lascana in Orange.

4. Debrief of recent Housing Discussions

Ben Fink called in at 8pm to lead the discussion on the housing meetings that were held on August 1st that were used as opportunities to train SCRCOG participants as well as engage the

community. It was pointed out that we had some people at the conversations who weren't expected and may be or were politically motivated.

It was agreed that both sessions provided a good source for follow-ups. Kathy will follow up with Robert Reed; Lew will follow up with Sally Conolly; Mary will follow up with Karen Hluchan and Brad Griffith, Elaine will follow up with Stephany Schulz and John McLaughlin. Goal is to work on having additional conversations.

Talk to participants about what they might want to do next. Make it clear that there's an open invitation to take part...they might have a real passion to follow up.

One of Ben's guests works with All In for Milford, a community alliance that successfully holds discussions on similar topics. Ben noted he's working for Team Inc. (anti-poverty organization in Derby, which includes Woodbridge in the town it serves), one of the supporters of "All In" organizations in the Valley.

The lunch with Rabbi Farbman was also productive, resulting in an invitation to have a housing conversation under the Sukkot in late September, inviting congregation members from all towns. Invitations will also be extended to the Rabbi at B'Nai Jacob. Jim will follow up with the invite. Lew will coordinate the event with help from Elaine and Jim.

Discussed putting together a video or a slide presentation showing how nice affordable housing developments can be and how they would fit into Woodbridge's landscape. Kathy mentioned that David Fink is planning a bus tour for municipal officials to look at different developments.

Ben extended an invitation to attend a community conversation that he was facilitating at the YMCA in Milford at 7pm the following day.

Our next Housing Meeting will be held on September 6th.

Meeting ended at 9:10 PM