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Comprehensive Plan – Housing Subcommittee MINUTES

Tuesday, September 28, 2021, at 6:30 p.m.
Bristol Town Office

Committee Present: Rob Davidson, Richard Francis, Brittany Gill
Absent: Rose Anne Holladay

Others Present: Steve Jorgensen (Special Adviser), Chris Hall.

The minutes of the last meeting were approved and there were no matters arising.

Richard Francis welcomed Steve Jorgensen and invited him to join the Committee at the table. Steve Jorgensen introduced himself and explained his experience with not-for-profits in New York which he thought could be applied in Bristol.

We began a cut and paste exercise, using housing chapters from four towns, Belfast, China, New Gloucester, and Thomaston in order to promulgate a draft chapter for Bristol. This would be rudimentary and require additional and recent data but would answer the six questions that are asked in Chapter 208.

At Richard Francis's suggestion we concentrated on Thomaston's plan but used the other plans as reference when there were useful additions or suggestions. (The document used in the meeting is attached).

Rob Davidson reported the recently uncovered Bristol 1987 plan and urged us to be consistent in our presentation by using 1987 and 2002 as examples.

We looked at each of the questions in Chapter 208 and noted our information needs and discrepancies. The questions prompted many discussions and some contention, and the following notes are an abbreviation of topics touched upon. The initials at the end of each paragraph note the person who will further research the question, provide data, and formulate a draft answer using Thomaston as the model. The overarching issue, which preoccupied us, was providing homes that younger families could afford to rent or buy and the question of the mechanisms that could be found to enable their building. Steve Jorgensen offered his experience in New York and will add it to our future deliberations and drafts.

Questions from Chapter 208

Aims: Thomaston has specific aims (preservation of Historic center and equitable housing opportunities) which we might analyze and present for Bristol. (All)

Q.1 Population, demographics, and additional units:

We need to establish considerable data. RoseAnne Holladay has gathered a good deal which is on the committee's resource folder in the website. She will continue to work on it as data becomes available from the census etc. (RAH)

Q.2 Affordability:

We will gather data about median income and property prices and insert it into our draft. (RPD)

Q. 3 Seasonal to year round dwellings:

We will investigate using CEO, Treasurer and other records and watch closely the impact of Covid. (RMF)

Q.4 Necessity of affordable housing of all types:

Brittany will research and project numbers needed. Review especially Belfast and Thomaston. (BG)

Q.5 Major Issues:

Concern about climate resiliency and affordability in a rapidly gentrifying community.

Q.6 Regulations:

We discussed regulation variations across the four plans and will research further before drafting. The principal concerns are multiple family homes and cluster housing, and lot size. (All; but RF to gather and divide when applicable.)

We briefly discussed the Andrea Perley discussion memo and Rob Davidson described the recent drive-round of New Harbor where the problems were less about the quality of housing and more about climate resiliency. There were few substandard dwellings, but none in that part of Bristol that could be considered a 'starter home'.

The meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting 8.15 am 26 October at New Harbor Fire Station