

Town of Princeton, Mass. -- Online Meeting

Housing Implementation Committee Minutes

Nov. 28, 9:00 am

Present:

Co-chairs Carla Zottoli and Deb Cary
Advisory Committee: Jennifer Greene
Planning Board: Ann Neuburg
Richy Bisk
Jennifer Greene
Phil Gott

Guests: Barbara Guthrie, Lar Greene

Call to Order: 9:02

Administrative: Richy: Motion to approve minutes of the 11-2-2023 meeting as submitted
Carla: second
Vote: unanimous approve.

Discussions: The Affordable Homes Act (AHA) is new and not yet in its final form. Deb has been in contact with Community Services Division at Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (Chris Kluchman). Chris has offered to meet with us to discuss housing support for towns like Princeton including what may come from the AHA. In addition, Housing Commissioner Ed Augustus has also offered his support and interest in assisting Princeton.

TO DO: Deb to invite Chris to our next meeting or schedule another time for two of us to meet with him

Ongoing: All members, send questions about the AHA to Carla who will compile them for discussion. The idea is to create a list of questions that can be submitted to CMRPC.

Discussion: septic engineering options. Deb and Ann agreed to speak to Lar Greene about emerging septic technologies. Lar joined the meeting, and verified that emerging technologies will introduce change. For example, the size of leach fields. New technologies and designs might allow small scale shared septic and/or water in Princeton's challenging conditions.

TO DO: invite Lar to future meetings to learn more.

Discussion: how many ADUs are in Princeton? How many rental units? Carla expressed interest in getting credit for the number of rental units that probably are being rented at an "affordable rate"

This led to the suggestion that we talk with the state housing officials about making changing to the regulations that require "affordable" credit being only for when a unit owner accepts state funds as part of the payment program.

TO DO: Ann will ask assessor for data.

TO DO: Leftover from last meeting. Ann will draft a simpler definition of affordable housing and attempt to determine what the current income numbers are for Princeton.”

Discussion: possible sites for development. Committee should pursue all options, including town-owned parcels.

Deb reported on a site visit to Mechanics Hall. The Hall will be available for redevelopment through Princeton’s RFP process. Selectboard Member Bob Cumming suggested to Deb that the Housing Implementation Committee review the possibility of housing there. Allegedly the site is permitted for a 2 bedroom system. It is possible that additional land could be added from abutters. Expanding the site could make possible redevelopment at a larger scale for both residential and commercial use.

TO DO: Additional sites should be identified and evaluated. Members are encouraged to propose sites for further study.

Discussion: [new affordable housing project](#) underway in Westminster. Committee members are encouraged to learn about what other towns are doing and report back.

Carla contacted Princeton’s Wachusett House. Built with USDA funds, no preference is given to local residents. 37 are on the waitlist. See [Wachusett House Info](#)

Next Steps:

Continue to develop priorities and role.
Keep tabs on the AHA (aka the Housing Bill Bond)

Next Meeting:

Friday, December 15, 9:00 am

Adjourn:

Richy - Motion to adjourn
Carla - Second
Vote: unanimous aye
Adjourn at 9:54.

Respectfully Submitted Ann Neuburg

Wachusett House Info

Three waiting lists

- 1) Very Low income- under \$37,000 per year- 37 people on list (6 are Princeton residents)
- 2) Low Income- about 20 people on list
- 3) Moderate income- about 20 people on list

ONLY THE VERY LOW INCOME PEOPLE EVER GET A SPOT

- Funded by the USDA so no priority can be given to Princeton residents
- Rent is “technically” \$988 BUT no one actually pays that. Currently residents actually pay between, \$175-\$700 per month
- Rent is calculated in a complicated formula but basically: 30% of income – medical expenses - \$105 utility voucher = rent

“THERE IS DESPERATE NEED FOR MORE ELERLY HOUSING IN PRINCETON” quote from administrator of Wachusett House