Minutes

Affordable Housing Committee

Thursday, April 1, 2021
4:00 PM via Zoom

In attendance: Mike Hulsey, Shahida Keen, Marie Pineo, Patrick Hess, Brent Wilson, Ben Martineau, Mike Duvernay, Joshua Reny

1) The meeting was called to order following a quorum at 4:06 p.m.

2) Minutes of the February 11 meeting were reviewed and approved by consensus. The March 18 meeting never occurred, regrettably, due to a technical issue with Zoom.

3) Legislation and Initiatives. Patrick informed the group of LD 609, the purpose of which is to study zoning and land use restrictions that impact the creation of affordable housing. Marie provide a link to information on the bill in the chat: https://www.maine.gov/tools/whatsnew/index.php?topic=HouseDems+News&id=4367317&v=Article. Brent informed the group about LD 473, the purpose of which is to create a state-level housing voucher program, a security deposit guarantee, and funding for housing navigators. The bill can be found here: http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP0347&item=1&snum=130

4) Homelessness Report. Josh spoke about the recent Council workshop on homelessness and next steps related to the recently completed report and recommendations. Funding has been included in the City’s proposed budget for street outreach and another staff member in Social Services. There will be additional discussions related to healthcare outreach and collaboration with partner agencies. The Council is also looking forward to considering recommendations that will be made in the Housing Assessment and Strategies report, which will be undertaken throughout 2021.

5) Council Goals. Josh shared the Council goals recently adopted, and the group discussed how their work fits in with those goals. Shahida noted that housing should also align with goals for sustainability and resiliency in One Climate Future Plan.

6) Housing Trust Fund. Brent suggested that the group revisit the work of developing a manual for the Housing Trust Fund, and proposed that one or two committee members work with staff on this. He will share the outline via email and staff will compile some other examples for the group to review. Ben suggested the group take a look at Portland’s Housing Trust Fund manual. This work can be done in phases in the coming months.

7) Housing Assessment & Strategy RFP. The RFP has been advertised for several weeks, and an addendum was recently sent out responding to a few questions. The deadline for proposals is April 23rd. Staff will work on an evaluation and scoring tool for the Committee to
use when reviewing the proposals. Review of proposals will likely consume most of the next meeting.

8) Housing Barriers. The group discussed the need to review and consider various housing barriers and potential policy recommendations. There may be a future Council workshop on this topic and the Committee should be prepared to participate and offer recommendations. Marie suggested this be a topic on a future agenda and the group devote some time to it.

9) Meeting Schedule. Brent suggested that the group adopt a fixed meeting schedule. After some discussion, it was agreed that the 1st Thursday of each month at 4:00 p.m. will be the set schedule, with the option to reschedule if there is a conflict that would prevent a quorum.

10) Roundtable. Mike H. mentioned that SPHA would be holding a community meeting next week related to proposed expansion of Betsy Ross. He will email details to Committee members. Patrick spoke about the pending Tree Ordinance and urged considering its potential effect on creation of affordable housing.

11) The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m. All in favor.