



CITY OF BIDDEFORD

Planning and Development Department

Mayor's Affordable Housing Task Force Meeting Minutes

Date: April 26, 2022
Time: 5:30 PM
Location: Hybrid Meeting: City Council Chambers & Remote Access Meeting (1MRSA § 403-B permits public proceedings through remote access during the declaration of state of emergency due to COVID-19).

Committee Members in Attendance:

Doris Ortiz (Chair), Martin Grohman (via Zoom), Reverend Shirley Bowen, Ciel Caldwell, Dominic J. Deschambault, Seth Harkness (via Zoom) & Ian Garcia-Grant
Staff Present: James Bennett, Gail Wilkerson (via Zoom) & Nan Whitten

1. Chair Ortiz brought the meeting to order at 5:34 PM.
2. There were no adjustments to the agenda.
3. Consent Agenda:
MOTIONS: 5:35 PM
Deschambault: Motion: To Approve Meeting Minutes from 3-29-22
Caldwell: Second
Unanimous Approval of Meeting Minutes from 3-29-22.
4. Presentation by Guy Gagnon, Biddeford Housing Authority as follows:
 - Guy is a resident and native to Biddeford
 - The housing crisis is both regional and national
 - The Housing Authority's work is 2 fold: they work with the Section 8 sector and they have branched into development to create more affordable housing through HUD and MSHA.
 - There is a statewide housing waitlist residents and those who work in the community get top priority.
 - The list is fluid but it can take up to 6 years to get a voucher.
 - The voucher holder then needs to find a place and with the lack of real estate and high rents, the housing crisis is worsening.
 - Guy talked about the housing the Housing Authority has created
 - He feels the crisis cannot only be solved by the government but the private sector must assist.
 - He would like the developers to get TIFs and to be offered bonuses for affordable housing, give them a big incentive.
5. Discussion
5.1-Council Housing Goals

- Jim Bennett (City Manager) presented the 2020 Housing Goals from the Council
- He talked about how people are having to choose between their hometowns and cheap space
- As the Biddeford community changed, so did the market.
- Now Biddeford is more desirable
- There is a gap in housing when people want to go from their starter house to the next house up in Biddeford. There is a shortage of inventory for next homes.

5.2-Affordable Housing TIF

- Mr. Bennett talked about using the TIF program for affordable housing.
- He talked about how as values are going up in the City, our revenues from the State decline.
- He talked about the in process Diamond Match Project
- Mr. Bennett told the Task Force how the COVID situation has made lifestyle changes. Out of state people are buying up the inventory in Maine and driving up the prices.

5.3-Outreach Program

- Danica Lamontagne talked about communications coming from the Task Force. What information do we want and from where do we want it. Each Task Force member spoke on what they are interested in, among the ideas are as follows:
Financial hardship, budget issues, different types of housing lifestyles, nontraditional housing ideas, skewed information, opportunities for people to pull themselves up, using a neighborhood network to get information from those who do not have computers, being committed and giving time, full spectrum of community, diverse approaches, working with builders of all levels and what can we do better.

5.4-Request Extensions

- Chair Ortiz asked the Task Force about the possibility of asking the Council for an extension of 3-4 months to deliver this project.
- Give the Council preliminary actionable suggestions and any items they feel strongly about can go to Council at any time.
- The extension will give the Task Force time to prioritize what has to be tackled and in what order.

MOTIONS: 7:28 PM

Deschambault-Motion-to request 3-4 month's extension from the Council, delivering preliminary results by September 15, 2022 and final results by November 15, 2022

Caldwell-Second

Unanimous approval to request extension from the City Council.

5.5-Next Steps

- Give Danica Lamontagne preliminary feedback
- Focus on the housing goal and where to modify it
- Revisit the original charge of the Task Force

- Create definitions and sub categories of terms used by Task Force
- Think and discuss how to keep on schedule
- Meetings are the 4th Tuesday of each month at 5:30 in the City Council Chambers as well as via Zoom.

6. Adjourn:

- Deschambault: Motion to adjourn 7:34 PM
- Garcia-Grant: second
- Motion carried with unanimous vote

Task Force Chair

Date

These minutes are summary and are not intended to be verbatim. Archived meetings are viewable on the City's website: www.biddefordmaine.org.