

Town of Agawam
Housing Committee
Minutes
July 24 , 2018

Members Present: Paul Jenney, Gail Mathes, Mildred Parzychowski, Vincenzo Ronghi, Corinne Wingard.

Others Present: Marc Strange, Director Planning and Community Development, Henry Kozloski. Will Clark.

Meeting called to order at 6:04 by Member Parzychowski.

1. Approval of Minutes of June 26, 2018:

Motion by Member Ronghi, Second by Member Jenney. All in favor.

2. Report on CPA Public Hearing:

Member Ronghi reported on his presentation to the CPA Public Hearing which included everything had talked about at last Housing Committee meeting: Housing Coordinator, Housing Trust, Consultant for Zoning related to Housing. No CPA member had an issue with any item. Member Wingard stated a member of the public brought up Habitat for Humanity. Director Strange stated town has met with Habitat for Humanity before. Problem has always been getting land. Discussion of using infill lots, and Director Strange stated town needs an infill bylaw. Member Wingard noted that Councilor Mercadante, the only Councilor present was very positive.

3. Discussion of Sub-Committee re: Housing Coordinator position for town:

Members Wingard and Parzychowski volunteered to be on Sub-Committee. Committee to work on scope of work, and pass information to Mayor. Member Ronghi stated Sub-Committees are prerogative of Housing Committee Chair who was not present. Motion by Member Mathes, Pending Approval of Chair, Housing Committee create Housing Committee Sub-Committee to define scope of work and make recommendations to the town. Second by Member Jenney. All in favor.

4. Community Engagement and Support:

Member Wingard stated would have been preferable for Housing Production Plan to have been completed before 586 Mill St. because of negative reactions and mis-information. Member Parzychowski noted need for residents to be informed regardless. Member Mathis stated no one had explained the

percentages of income that qualified for need for affordable housing, and education key, not related to specific project. Member Parzychowski stated need to be positive, show goal and where progress. Concerned that with condo's being approved, will add more units to towns count, and require more units on Subsidized Housing Inventory to reach 10%. Member Wingard noted need to build allies and for each member to do this individually.

Member Ronghi discussed what it would take to get the support of the Business side and developers, for example having someone else like the Housing Authority vet costs to unit. Also that inclusive zoning becomes important, and to look at things to give developer beside money. Community Member Clark stated developer might want to build, then help by putting money someplace else. Member Ronghi brought up if town had long range plan for disposing of assets. Director Strange stated there are rules to be followed if town gives land. Member Jenney pointed out that need to be careful not to be discriminatory in anything do. Discussion of home ownership development in East Longmeadow. Member Wingard stated great need for apartments and DHCD Local Initiative Program exists to help with this. Also Enterprise White Paper on Proven Local Strategies in developing affordable housing. Member Parzychowski requested copy of paper be sent to members.

Member Wingard stated lots of aspects of community, such as residents/neighbors/friends, developers, churches, etc. Stated that Mass Housing Partnership offers help with community engagement and had said at Housing Institute that would help Agawam. Committee members would like MHP to come to a meeting about this. Member Wingard will contact MHP and report back to committee. Member Parzychowski suggested that people come up with their own ideas for community engagement and discuss at next meeting

5. Working with Local Landlords:

Director Strange had prepared and sent members list of apartments in Agawam. This is a working list and more to be identified. Members to inform Director Strange if aware of any additional units. Committee thanked Director Strange and Planning Board staff member Amanda Boissonneault for work in preparing list which is a great start.

All agree want to work with existing landlords to create affordable units, and member Parzychowski stated Mayor has been reaching out to some landlords. Member Wingard stated important to follow rules so that apartments will be counted on the Subsidized Housing Inventory. Director Strange stated that with the addition of Soldier On, Agawam is now at 4.66 on the SHI. Member Wingard stated that when (62) units for 586 Mill St. are permitted, town will achieve one year safe harbor. There are many apartments in town already which are affordable, but they are "de-facto" affordable, and not on the SHI.

Members Jenney and Ronghi stated know which landlords to engage. Need to know what can give to landlords and how to give it. Possibility Housing

Authority do some tasks, and use CPA funds to pay a stipend. Member Jenney stated property owner will want something. Stated way landlords work now is to do credit report and background check, and repeat every so often. Stated need to look at how to make some units subsidized, and what can count as subsidy, for example, can Housing Authority management count for subsidy.

Member Wingard stated need to work closely with DHCD to meet requirements for SHI for existing apartments. Committee would like DHCD to come to meeting. Director Strange stated may be difficult to get DHCD to come out to meeting. Member Wingard will contact Margaux LeClair of DHCD, SHI and report back to committee.

Member Ronghi suggested create rental assistance. Member Jenney agreed Agawam Rental Assistance Fund. Member Ronghi suggested set up a way, say a lottery for fund. Still about money, what can we do for landlord. Member Parzychowski suggested identify below market rents, and help landlord help us. Ask landlords to tell us what they need, e.g. tax credit. Member Jenney stated many possible things town could do to help landlords, for example plow lots in snow storms.

Member Wingard suggested consider reaching out to non-profits to look into possibility of buying apartment complexes. Director Strange noted limited resources and want to get "bang for the buck".

6. In-depth discussion of Zoning: Accessory Apartments, infill housing inclusionary zoning, cluster developments:

Motion made by Member Jenney to table item because Planning Board Member not present. Second by Member Ronghi. All in favor.

7. Announcements:

Director Strange stated town has put in grant application to Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs. Director Strange discussed accessory apartments, infill housing By-Law would be great, and Inclusionary Zoning which helps with economic development. Framingham has it and everybody loves it, at 10% and helped economy. Stated need a priority list and as work through, Housing Committee can then submit proposal to CPA to hire Housing Coordinator/Consultant to effectuate priority items. Let town know what want to do. Put on next agenda.

Member Ronghi stated had question for CPA Chair Kosloski if CPA money can be used for zoning for housing. Director Strange noted that he is project manager for a grant for the Historic Association and could be for this. Committee can ask CPA for money for zoning. Member Wingard questioned trying to use other resources available for zoning, such as help available from Mass Housing Partnership, as while money in CPA is a lot it could be used up very quickly for housing. Director Strange stated that cost would be about \$15,000 so best to go

ahead. Member Ronghi stated had spent zero CPA money on housing, and have to do something. Zoning by-laws a tool that doesn't exist. CPA Chair Kosloski advised Housing Committee work with Planning Board.

Director Strange stated Planning Board can sponsor a By-Law, and City Council can sponsor a By-Law.

Director Strange stated there have been internal meetings at the town and determined not to move forward with a Housing Coordinator without prioritization of initiatives which Housing Committee needs to do.

Director Strange announced town has received invitation to State House Thursday re: CDBG application which was for Housing Rehabilitation, Aging in Place, and finding a way to make Town Hall more accessible.

8. Suggestions for Next Agenda:

Item 6 of this Agenda: In-depth discussion of zoning.

Community Engagement.

Housing Coordinator.

586 Mill St. Wayfinders has filed letter with state. Director Strange stated once the file is with the ZBA the process will start and town committees submit written statements within 30 days.

9. Any Other Business that may legally come before the Committee:

Member Wingard stated that National Night Out is being held August 7th at School Street Park, and would be an opportunity to have a table about housing. All agreed this was too short notice and to plan for next year.

Motion to Adjourn at 7:38 by Member Wingard, Second by Member Mathes. All in favor.