

Housing Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday December 15, 2009
5:00 p.m. City Hall – Room 209

Attending: Councilor John Anton, Chair, Councilor Kevin Donoghue, Councilor David Marshall, T.J. Martzial, HNS Division Director, Amy Grommes Pulaski, HCD Program Manager, Penny Littell, Planning & Urban Development Director, Alex Jaegerman, Planning Division Director

Item 1. Approve Minutes from November 9, 2009

Councilor Marshall motioned to approve the minutes of November 9, 2009, Councilor Donoghue seconded; Chair Anton did not vote because he was not a member of the Housing Committee at the time the minutes were taken. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 2. 2009 Workplan

Housing Committee Report

T.J. Martzial said Councilor Marshall had asked him to put together a brief report of the 2009 Housing Committee Workplan; three items were for the Planning Division and three were for Housing and Neighborhood Services. Two more items had come up during the year: Condominium Conversion Fees and Energy Efficiency Disclosure Forms. Contained within the Workplan is a direction the Committee could go in 2010. Councilor Anton asked if the B2b item is marginally through the planning board process. Penny Littell said yes. They had a workshop on November 24, she did not believe it was on the Planning Board's January agenda, and expected it to come to the City Council in February.

Penny Littell said that the R7 item was being handled by the planning staff level. Discussions of R7 had come out of discussions of the B2b zone. Councilor Marshall said when you're in a B2b zone, you have to refer to the neighboring residential zone. In a lot of cases, that refers to R6. Councilor Donoghue said maybe R6 could be improved enough to make R7 obsolete. They had discussed the area around Gorham's Corner when talking about making map amendments. They had come to the conclusion that they could look at the residential standards that already exist in the commercial B2b zone.

Item 3. Introduction to 2010-2015 Housing and Community Development Consolidated Plan and Process

Amy Grommes Pulaski reported on the 5 Year Consolidated Plan, which is submitted to HUD. It states what the plans are for the next five years with various HUD programs. It includes four funding sources: CDBG, HOME, ESG (Emergency Shelter Grant) and HOPWA (Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS). The City does not receive any HOPWA funds directly, but reports on the Frannie Peabody Center's use of the funds. The ESG is received by the City and is implemented through our Health and Human Services Department. HOME activities are reviewed by the Housing Committee and CDBG activities are reviewed by the Allocation Committee and all are eventually approved by the City Council in the Annual Action Plan. The CDBG Priority Task Force process has providing data that will help with the Plan. For HOME, there is a new Housing Consortium which includes the Cumberland County and the City. The 5 year Consolidated Plan requires a housing market analysis and Caroline Parras of GPCOG and Elizabeth Trice from the County have done a lot of research and have a wealth of data available. Because of the now County-wide housing program, the market analysis must be conducted on a County-wide basis. The Maine Affordable Housing Coalition (MAHC) will review the data and trends identified and staff will present the progress on data and trends to the Housing Committee over the next few months. Penny Littell clarified that the Housing Committee will not deal with strategizing for the County's part in the Consortium. The Consolidated Plan has a May 15th submittal date; TJ Martzial said he believed the plan goes to the City Council in March with the HCD budget, but he will check on

that. Chair Anton said the Housing Committee wants to review the Con Plan ahead of submittal. Penny Littell said the document is important in that one of the things it defines is the geographic focus for the use of funds; right now that is Bayside, but it could change. The Allocation Committee uses the report in considering how the CDBG money is allocated. TJ said the Housing Market Analysis we are working on with GPCOG is a big chunk of the Consolidated Plan. It will be the part that is of most value to the Housing Committee.

Item 4. 2010 Workplan

Chair Anton said there is an Implementation Executive Summary from the 2002 Housing Plan attached to the draft Workplan, and between that and brainstorming, they can come up with a list of topics to address. Councilor Donoghue said he would like to discuss how CDBG funds can be used to facilitate affordable housing development. Chair Anton said that is a good topic for the Con Plan discussion. The Con Plan will put CDBG and HOME on the table at the same time; he would like to make that a subset of their discussion of the Con Plan. They will have to prioritize the items: which do they HAVE to do and which do they WANT to do?

1. Targeted Neighborhood Improvement Plan

Can we coordinate efforts, based on geography, across various departments? We have limited staff and resources. Councilor Donoghue wants to examine tools for incentives for private infrastructure investment. We can look at one tool that we already have, the Bayside TIF, to see how we can use it for housing development. Chair Anton said he is also serving on the CDC, and plans to ask them to work on an update to the TIF policy. Councilor Donoghue said the Bayside district needs a capital plan. We have not paid attention to much of the street network and this sends a message to investors that this not a place to put their money. Chair Anton said this is an item that should be addressed sooner rather than later.

2. Housing Replacement Ordinance Review

All councilors agreed this was an item needing attention soon.

3. Homelessness Plan review and Update with HHS

Councilors Duson and Waxman are contemplating developing a Task Force order for the City Council to develop a ten year plan to eliminate homelessness in the City. He has asked HHS to keep the Housing Committee in the loop as it pertains to the housing component. Councilor Donoghue asked what could be done to continue to fund shelter such as the Florence House in the short term; we need to secure emergency shelter in the short term. Councilor Marshall said the Task Force is not in place and he believes the Housing Committee needs to address homelessness regardless. Chair Anton said he would neither act on the item nor dismiss it for now. He would put it "in the parking lot".

4. Neighborhood Stabilization Program

TJ said there is a September 2010 deadline for commitment of funds. Chair Anton said it is a necessary topic for the Housing Committee to address.

5. HOME RFP

Chair Anton said he will recuse himself from this item because he does business with many of the organizations who usually apply for these funds. TJ said the 2009 Housing Committee has decided to use an RFP instead of the walk-in process that had been used for the last fifteen years. There are HOME funds available and he thinks by using the new Con Plan market analysis data the Committee should be able to strategically design an RFP and get one out this year. The basic format of the RFP was worked through with the 2009 Committee. The item will be addressed in the Workplan.

6. Update Housing Action Plan items

Councilor Marshall said since the report was from 2002, they should first get a progress report on the items. Chair Anton agreed.

7. Condo Conversion Fees

Councilor Donoghue said this had been discussed during 2009 and the Housing Committee had recommended to the Finance Committee to raise conversion fees to help fund the Inspections program. As rental units are removed from the market, the condition of the remaining units is of the utmost importance and therefore, Inspections needs funding. Councilor Marshall said he also wants to talk about it. Penny Littell said she is not sure there is going to be much if any condominium conversions in the next year or so as there is a flood on the market. Chair Anton said that is exactly when you should enact the ordinance, in his opinion. The motive should not be funding of Inspections; it should be whether it's good housing policy or not.

8. Identify City owned Property for Residential Use

Councilor Donoghue said they had looked at tax acquired property maps which identify which areas had the opportunity for residential growth. But they came back to the idea of Why are we trying to dispose of public land when land is plentiful? He asked if the HOME RFP would be driven by geography or typology. Councilor Marshall said there was property that the City owned in Falmouth. He said the Housing Committee should decide what they want to do with it. TJ said that he understood that Greg Mitchell was working on this and he would check with him regarding residential consideration for City owned properties

9. Other

Chair Anton asked if there was anything else on that list to be dismissed or pushed to the top? Councilor Marshall said he thought everything on the list should be addressed, if only as a progress update. Councilor Donoghue said the Peninsula B zones were important and needed to be re-evaluated for residential parking requirements. Penny Littell said that any prioritization of the list needs to mesh with the overall Department priority list approved by the City Council.

Chair Anton said the next Housing Committee meeting is scheduled for January 5. There will be two items on the agenda: The prioritization of the Workplan and the Housing Replacement Ordinance. The Con Plan will be discussed in February.

Public Comment

Charles Bragdon, Munjoy South

Would like to see the Housing Committee re-evaluate and narrow down the 'project of special merit' exceptions of the Housing Replacement Ordinance. Chair Anton said this would be addressed at the January meeting.

Meeting Adjourned