

**TOWN OF BARNSTABLE – HOUSING COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

September 7, 2022 at 4:00 PM

Selectmen’s Conference Room, Town Hall, 367 Main Street, Hyannis

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Hilda Haye calls the meeting to order.

Member	Present	Absent
Haye, Hilda	X	
Breagy, Paula		X
Lynde, Donald	X	
Mort, Meaghan	X	

Also in attendance is Ryan Bennett, Housing Coordinator and Lorri Finton, Director of Barnstable Housing Authority.

NOTICE OF RECORDING

The Chairwoman inquires whether anyone is taping this meeting and to please make their presence known.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Chair, Vice-Chair

Ryan Bennett, Housing Coordinator, announces that David Carey has resigned as Chair and thanks him for his service. Donald Lynde makes a motion to elect Hilda Haye as Chair. Meagan Mort seconds. Hilda Haye is hesitant to accept, and Ms. Bennett suggests she could accept the role in a temporary capacity. Hilda Haye accepts the nomination of temporary Chair. Donald Lynde makes a motion to elect Meagan Mort as Vice Chair. Hilda Haye seconds. Meagan Mort accepts the nomination.

Vote:

Aye: Hilda Haye, Meagan Mort, Donald Lynde

Nay: None

HOUSING COORDINATOR REPORT

- **Inclusionary Zoning Feasibility Analysis Update**

Ms. Bennett says the town has hired a consultant to look at their inclusionary ordinance and assess what works and what could be improved. She hopes to have a report by the end of the year. The deliverable will be recommended changes to the ordinance that this committee could recommend to Town Council. She explains that the consultant will be conducting one-on-one interviews. Chair Haye asks who they will be interviewing, to which Ms. Bennett says members of the public with a special interest or knowledge of housing. There will be a representative from Housing Assistance Corporation, POC Cape Cod, a couple developers with experience going through the process, a county expert on homelessness, and more. Meagan Mort asks if they will be interviewing any current homeless persons, as she feels strongly that they should. Ms. Bennett says it’s particularly difficult to reach that population, but believes they fit more into the Housing Production Plan update—the inclusionary zoning analysis is very technical.

The group discusses the income levels associated with inclusionary zoning. Ms. Bennett says Barnstable’s inclusionary zoning ordinance specifies 65% area median income. Meagan Mort brings up that for affordable housing in Falmouth, their 80% AMI for a 2-bedroom unit rents at \$1,851/month and at 100% AMI it’s \$2,340/month. She believes that’s higher than some market rates. Ryan Bennett explains that the HUD income saw a 30% jump in area medium income for Barnstable—she doesn’t understand it or know how to explain it. The group discusses that that is not feasible and the gap is getting wider. Ms. Bennett says it is a valid agenda item for a future meeting if they would like to discuss it in depth. Lorri Finton, Director of Barnstable Housing Authority, adds that HUD just released their new fair market rents and those rose significantly: a 1-bedroom is \$1,538 and a 2-bedroom is over \$2,000/month, and the unit sizes are going down. Meaghan Mort says whatever the committee needs to do to help, they want to push for—they are looking for guidance from Ms. Bennett. They discuss cluster zoning, multi-family housing, tiny homes, and other options.

Meaghan Mort asks if such a thing exists as a statewide “housing emergency.” Ms. Bennett responds that the County Home Program is currently building out a plan for the use of the ARP funds, which have a specific use criteria for homeless prevention and housing stabilization, so that will deal with emergency housing issues. Lorri Finton says there are housing authorities in the state that have

rent-to-own and people can use their vouchers and their portion goes to a mortgage. Meaghan Mort asks why we don't have that—she doesn't get a response. She and Hilda Hays ask if it is an option they could explore. Ms. Finton says if she can find the time to explore it, she will. They discuss whether it could be a town-supported initiative. Ms. Bennett suggests she and Ms. Finton put their heads together to brainstorm how to move that idea forward. They discuss requirements for subsidizing.

HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN PROJECT UPDATE

A consultant was supposed to present this agenda item but was late, so Ms. Bennett attempts to. She thinks the intent was to give an update of where they are in the process and set the stage for what the 9/21/22 Community Forum will look like. She shares with the committee the presentation from the consultant.

- **Project schedule**

It kicked off in July and they are hoping to have the plan submitted to DHCH for their approval by the end of March. Between now and then, the consultant will continue doing public outreach. The presentation goes into what's been done since the last HPP.

- **Preliminary findings of the housing needs assessment**

The consultant lists key takeaways as seeing smaller units, year-round rentals are challenging for the seasonal workforce, and extremely and very low income affordable income units are very scarce.

- **Discussion about housing needs findings; concerns and opportunities**

Single-family homes have increased in percentage. 7 out of 10 people live alone or with 1 other person. Hyannis is trending younger. This is from census data or American Community Survey. Multi-family zoning is limited and mostly in Hyannis. Barnstable's population is uncertain. 30% of houses are second homes. The group discusses possibly utilizing town-owned land. Ms. Bennett will find out what's available from Asset Management. Regarding ADUs, support is lacking. It's a complex building process and engineers and contractors are backed up for months. At this point, Meaghan Mort leaves the meeting, but the group continues because Lorrie Finton constitutes a voting quorum. Ms. Bennett skips through the data slides that the consultant will present at the forum.

Lorrie Finton explains that when market rates rise, it gives renters with subsidies a little more money on their voucher. The problem is becoming even finding a place, not just affording it. The maximum for HUD used to be 120 days to find a place, but they have had to extend to 180+ days recently.

- **Outreach materials and organization**

A survey will be launched soon (not date-certain yet).

- **Format of the upcoming public forum on September 21st at 6PM at the Adult Community Center**

There will be a Zoom webinar feature where you can participate in polls remotely.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jake Dewey asks if they are collecting any data or if they're using census data. Ryan Bennett says census data and American Community Survey are the best available. Mr. Dewey asks why can't the town or the hospital or some of the town's larger employers provide data on salary or wage. He wants to be able to calculate true Barnstable workforce wages. He asks if Ms. Bennett could request a list of town employee salaries, which are public record, to help get a picture of real-life town median income is. Maybe there needs to be another category or distinction that is specifically Barnstable workforce housing. He believes that is what Affordable Housing Trust money should be going towards. Chair Hays agrees, and adds that there are large repercussions for families where parents are having to work more than one job. She suggests asking local fast food restaurants or supermarkets to get specific wage data. Ryan Bennett says she will talk to the consultant to see if they have the capacity to get more recent, local data.

Jake Dewey also suggests raising the fee for short-term rental inspections. Right now the fee is \$90 for a year-round rental and \$90 for a short-term rental. He thinks it's an easy opportunity to add a yearly fee for short-term rentals, which could go into the Affordable Housing Trust or some other less restricted funds. The town, as a large employer, may need to consider owning property that is housing—employers are having to buy housing for their staff. Chair Hays says everything is moving so slowly. Jake Dewey agrees and wonders how much was actually accomplished since the last HPP. He thinks this Committee needs to be the one to throw it back to Town Council to revisit the action steps regularly to see if things are working. He would love to see this committee make regular recommendations to Town Council. They discuss that the ADU ordinance has not been as successful as planned because of the increased cost of building materials, but there have been some successes since the last HPP. Jake Dewey asks if the Affordable Accessory Program could be revisited, to possibly remove the owner-occupied requirement. Donald Lynde says many people don't understand that they don't need \$150,000 or \$200,000 in their pocket to build an accessory structure to rent. Jake Dewey asks if neighboring communities have ever participated in a joint Housing Committee summit of sorts, because this a regional problem. Chair Hays likes the idea and requests to put that on a future agenda.

NEXT MEETING DATE: October 5th

The group discusses what time the next meeting should be. Ms. Bennett says 4 or 5 p.m. works for the consultant so would be preferable. The group decides on 5 p.m.

ITEMS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF MEETING

Ms. Bennett says it was brought to her attention today that Town Council is forming a subcommittee to review a project proposed on the harbor called the Dockside. It's a large housing development project. They have requested that a member of the Housing Committee attend that subcommittee. She asks the members to consider their interest/availability. The group discusses the price of the condos at the project and that the developers have requested to have their 10% of affordable apartments offsite.

ADJOURN

Donald Lynde makes a motion to adjourn the meeting. Lorrie Finton seconds.

DOCUMENTS USED AT THIS MEETING

PowerPoint entitled "Town of Barnstable HPP Update - Meeting #2" created by Jenn Goldson and Laura Smead of JM Goldson, dated 9/7/22

Respectfully submitted,
Genna Ziino, Administrative Assistant

Further detail may be obtained by viewing the video via Channel 18 on demand at <http://www.town.barnstable.ma.us>