

South Kingstown Affordable Housing Collaborative
Thursday, April 22, 2010

Meeting Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the South Kingstown Affordable Housing Collaborative was held on Thursday, April 22, 2010 in the Council Chambers, South Kingstown Town Hall, 180 High Street, Wakefield, RI.

The roll call was as follows:

Marc Archambault	Present	Cheryl Hartnett	Present
John Taylor Ellis	Present	Geoffrey Marchant	Present
Jean Olivier Johnson	Present	Paul Jordan	Present

Staff member Vincent Murray, Director of Planning and Ken Kenerson, Planning Board ex-officio member, were also present.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Taylor Ellis.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Marchant made a motion, Mr. Jordan seconded; motion carried: "To approve the minutes of the February 25, 2010 meeting."

VOTE: Ellis – aye Archambault – aye Hartnett – aye Johnson – aye Marchant – aye Jordan – aye

Mr. Marchant made a motion, Ms. Hartnett seconded; motion carried: "To approve the minutes of the March 11, 2010 meeting."

VOTE: Ellis – aye Archambault – aye Hartnett – aye Johnson – aye Marchant – aye Jordan – aye

3. Discussion of Town Website as a Vehicle for Public Relations Regarding Affordable Housing Issues

Mr. Murray pointed out that the Town's website has a "Latest News" feature that is available for the Affordable Housing Collaborative to use for their needs. He suggested putting up topics such as "What is Affordable Housing?" and "How does South Kingstown fill that need?" A brief narrative, pictures, maps and links to such sites as RI Housing and Housing Works RI could also be incorporated into the Affordable Housing page on the website. A lengthy discussion ensued with suggestions and ideas. It was suggested that a "draft" initial program for posting could be presented for consideration by the group in May.

4. Review of Housing Issues for Comprehensive Community Plan Update

Mr. Murray noted that the Town has hired a consultant, Horsley Witten Group, to assist with the 2010 Comprehensive Community Plan Five Year Update that is currently involved in data gathering which includes a Community Attitudes Survey, one-on-one key informant interviews, and a community workshop. Mr. Murray would like to invite the consultants to speak with the AHC in the very near future.

It is planned that the 2010 Update will combine the Affordable Housing Production Plan and the Housing Element into one document in the Comprehensive Community Plan. He would like to get comments from the members relative to the problems, goals and implementation issues of the current Housing Element. A discussion ensued including issues such as encouraging the State to allow Section 8 units and qualified rental units to count toward the Town's affordable housing total, making sure that the update reflects the changes in the economy and housing market, minimum housing focus (aging of local housing stock), promotion of LEED certification for energy efficient homes, rehabilitation of existing housing (housing stock preservation) and focus on housing for families. Mr. Murray feels that the diversity in the current element is good and should be retained and program and strategies should have better integration of the Housing Authority properties into the community at large (e.g. Peace Dale Revitalization Committee). Focus should also be given to upgrading and revitalizing the Champagne Heights property.

Mr. Murray also voiced some ideas regarding local incentives such as waiving of building permit fees and/or sewer hook –up fees. Discussion ensued.

He also feels that if URI builds faculty housing on campus, it should be treated so that it contributes to the Town's 10% low-moderate income housing quota. The University has indicated a willingness to consider this.

5. Other Items of Concern and Interest

Mr. Ellis asked about the status of the Watson House. Mr. Murray stated that it is still tied up with legal issues relative to which program benefits from the proceeds of any sale but it may resurface as a potential affordable housing resource. The manager wants the Planning Department to take another look at what to do with the property because the Town is spending money on its upkeep year after year with no return on it.

6. Adjournment

Mr. Jordan made a motion to adjourn, Ms. Johnson seconded; motion carried.

VOTE: Ellis – aye Archambault – aye Hartnett – aye Johnson – aye Marchant – aye Jordan – aye

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.