

**Cumberland Housing Task Force
August 23, 2022, Meeting Minutes
6:30 p.m. Town Council Chambers**

Call To Order: Chair Broder opened the meeting at 6:30.

Roll Call: Present: Chair James Broder, Vice Chair Lu Gallaudet, Brian Cashin, Rick Doane, Betsey Harding, Mark Lapping, Katie Magoun, Eben Sweetser, Gail Witherill, Justin Wood, Council Liaisons: Mark Segrist & Robert Vail (Councilor Vail arrived at 7:12 pm). Staff Present: Carla Nixon, Town Planner & Christina Silberman, Admin. Asst.

Approval of Minutes of last Meeting: Ms. Witherill moved to approve the minutes of the August 9, 2022, meeting as amended, seconded by Ms. Harding and **VOTED**, all in favor.

Chair's Report and Discussion: Chair Broder outlined the process for future meetings. Chair Broder said he would like to give assignments to Task Force members to look at a particular thing and share information with the group.

Chair Broder lead discussion regarding the following items.

a. Approach to Scope and Priorities: Chair Broder stated that it is the Housing Task Force's job to facilitate creative ways to develop affordable housing and provide for long-term availability for those people in Cumberland that need it. Chair Broder said the mission is to deal with all people in Cumberland that have a need. Chair Broder noted that "affordable" means different things in different programs.

Chair Broder referred to the recent municipal survey that provided specific questions on affordable housing and showed that a solid majority are in favor of this.

The Housing Task Force reviewed existing housing projects as follows:

- Smalls Brook Crossing, with 49 single family homes, had a \$20,000 silent second mortgage. Some of the silent mortgages have been paid off and some are still in the program. Ms. Nixon will check to see how many of these properties are still in the program.
- Cumberland Meadows Senior Housing consists of 30 rental units with one or two bedrooms. This was done in 1991 by the Housing Authority. Chair Broder said this program looks to be successful with rents that are comparatively low. There are three subsidized units. Some MSHA (Maine State Housing Authority) money was used to develop this project but MSHA is no longer involved. The Town gives first preference to Cumberland residents on the waiting list when a unit is available.
- Village Green at Drowne Rd. School is a tax credit project with 59 units that are for low-income people that are 62+ or people that are disabled of any age. Phoenix Management is a private company that owns/manages the building and leases the land from the Town.
- Cumberland Foreside Village Apartments are privately owned with 96 units located on US Route 1. A minimum number of senior tenants is required. These are market rent units. Mark Lapping noted that Cumberland Foreside Village was originally for commercial development. The developer later requested residential development and the Town Council bargained to have a certain number of the units for the elderly.

The Task Force discussed the above projects and other projects that were done through a contract zoning agreement (CZA).

b. Comprehensive Plan Changes: Chair Broder said the Comprehensive Plan showed at the time that the population was going down. Maine's population is now going up. Chair Broder said the Task Force is not looking to put limits on how many people can come to Cumberland. Ms. Magoun noted that there may be some push back regarding impacts to schools.

Mr. Doane said that the data used in 2009 showed the average median home price was under 300K. This is no longer accurate. Chair Broder said the Comprehensive Plan has to be reconceived and the Task Force can make suggestions based on realities.

Mr. Lapping asked if the Task Force should recommend to the Town Council that the Town revisit the Comprehensive Plan. Chair Broder said the basis of the housing and infrastructure pieces are based on data that is no longer accurate. The Task Force can look at the Comprehensive Plan to see what should change.

The Zoning and Overlay Zoning Maps were reviewed.

Councilor Vail arrived at 7:12 pm. Council Vail noted that he spoke with Councilor Segrist previously and they both wish to be active participants in the Housing Task Force.

c. Impacts of LD 2003 and other Zoning and Planning Issues: Chair Broder said that by Statute the Town has the authority to tell every landowner what they can or can't do with their land and where things can go. There are concerns with zoning, such as exclusionary zoning. The State has passed a law that mandates changes in an area that was exclusively within the purview of the Town. Chair Broder said that zoning is now being changed by State law to increase density and other things.

Chair Broder said a workshop is scheduled with the Town Council and Planning Board on October 26th to meet with the Town Attorney to discuss the requirements and implementation of LD 2003. Chair Broder asked if the Task Force should present their concerns and recommendations to the Town Council and Planning Board and ask to be part of the meeting. Chair Broder said zoning changes that may be needed to change the approach from contract zones to something policy driven are a big deal. Councilor Segrist shared the Town Attorney's summary of LD 2003 with Task Force members.

Mr. Wood noted that the two successful projects, from an affordability standpoint, are on Town owned land or owned by the Town. Mr. Wood said to make a meaningful impact he thinks the easiest path would be to assess Town owned land for some type of development.

Ms. Gallaudet said LD2003 is trying to get more affordable housing by putting four houses on a one-acre lot and this would make them less expensive. Mr. Wood noted that this may not be true. Ms. Magoun said having more housing supply is key. There are not many options for people looking for a one-bedroom. Accessory dwellings may be the answer. Ms. Magoun said that anything not specifically restricted to being affordable is not going to stay affordable long-term.

Mr. Lapping reported on a Housing Opportunity Fund created under this LD and said the Town needs to understand how to apply to this fund.

d. Infrastructure planning and funding: Chair Broder said it is the Town that decides where public water and sewer is extended. The more property that is served, the more opportunity there is for housing to be built. Chair Broder said infrastructure needs, as part of the Comprehensive Plan, have to be looked at to facilitate more housing. Chair Broder said he believes there are grants associated with this kind of infrastructure and the Task Force needs to understand what is available.

The Task Force reviewed locations of public water and sewer. Chair Broder asked Councilor Vail to get information on the sewer capacity for the Town.

Chair Broder outlined a potential housing project in Heritage Village that has a CZA. There is additional land available for residential development and Chair Broder said this is something to look at. Chair Broder said he visited the Route 100 area and there are a lot of places where an elderly or affordable housing overlay could be meaningful.

e. Cumberland Housing Authority: Chair Broder said the Cumberland Housing Authority last did a project in 1991 with 30 units and runs the facility nicely. Chair Broder would like the Task Force to look at what the Cumberland Housing Authority's powers are and what it can do.

f. Federal and State Programmatic Resources: Chair Broder reviewed handouts of three programs; HUD's Section 202 – Housing for the Elderly, Rural Housing Service's Rural Rental Housing Loans Section 515 and the Congressional Research Service's Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.

Councilor Segrist was excused from the remainder of the meeting.

g. TIF Funds: TIF Funds will be reviewed at a future meeting.

h. Land Acquisition: Chair Broder noted that land acquisition has been discussed during review or prior items.

i. Creative options; Tiny House, Co-housing: Chair Broder said these would not provide great numbers but a lot of people are interested in these options and they are worthwhile to consider.

j. Assignments and Deadlines: Chair Broder outlined assignments and asked for two to three committee members to volunteer to work together on each assignment.

Assignments:

1. Gather information on existing/proposed Cumberland projects: Justin Wood & Brian Cashin
2. Review of Comprehensive Plan: Katie Magoun, Rick Doane & Betsey Harding
3. Review current Cumberland zoning requirements: Eben Sweetser & Lu Gallaudet Betsey Harding
4. Explore infrastructure funding sources: Jamie Broder
5. Investigate specific housing programs: Jaime Broder, Katie Magoun & Lu Gallaudet
6. Look into the Cumberland Housing Authority: Gail Witherill & Eben Sweetser

7. Investigate Tax Increment Finance Districts: Rick Doane
8. Investigate land acquisition: Justin Wood & Eben Sweetser
9. Explore tiny houses and co-housing: Mark Lappin, Gail Witherill & Katie Magoun
10. Research LD2003 and effects to affordable/elderly housing: Bob Vail & Mark Segrist

Administrative Matters: Ms. Nixon reported that the Housing Task Force will not be using SharePoint because it didn't work for everyone and suggested members create a folder in their email to save their Housing Task Force information.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.