

Waterbury Area Housing Task Force Meeting

Thursday, May 18th, 2023 | 6:00-8:00 pm

Hybrid Meeting: Steele Community Room (28 N. Main St.) and on Zoom

MINUTES

Attendees: Alyssa Johnson, Kati Gallagher, P. Howard "Skip" Flanders, Mark Pomilio, Jr., Chris Balzano, Joe Camaratta, Elizabeth Danyew, Madeleine Young, Eliza Novick-Smith, and Kane Sweeney

Review agenda

Alyssa proposed to add a conversation about homelessness after the short term rental conversation to the agenda. The agenda was approved after the change was made.

Introductions

Members of the Task Force introduced themselves. Kane S., a new addition from the Select Board to the Task Force introduced himself and shared his background and interests in the Task Force to the group.

Relevant Task Force member updates

An update was given on the 51 South Main Street project and that they are extending the project by one year. The Select Board gave an update on the possible charter of Waterbury doing a Local Option Tax (LOT). Some initial resistance from the businesses was shown but after talking about the possibilities of using the extra revenue towards housing they were more understanding of the LOT. Skip F. talked about the EFUD water offsets after tropical storm Irene and decreased use from the Statehouse. Mark P. and Skip F. talked about the UDAG Loan. Elizabeth D. asked a question about the potential for using the current land of the old Stanley & Wasson buildings. Alyssa gave an update on the situation. She talked about testifying and the ability to use this land for housing. The Planning Commission received a grant to help with the current Zoning Rewrite.

Review and approve minutes from the first Task Force meeting

The Members of the Task Force reviewed and approved the minutes from the January 25, 2023 Meeting. Joe Camarrata made a motion to accept the minutes and Chris Balzano seconded the motion, none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of major themes and potential action steps from last meeting

Gathering data is the most important thing for the Task Force to do first. We want to find out the number of renters in Waterbury and number of rental units in Waterbury. We want to put together a survey to find the number of renters and the price of their rent. We also want to find a way to survey the business owners and about their employees' interest in living in Waterbury. The members of the Task Force talked about what are their goals for the committee. The Task Force will take a look at a provided resource from the state known as the Getting Started

Community Housing Needs Assessment. It was decided that the committee will take a look at this document during their next meeting.

Short rental discussion and next steps

Kane S. talked about short term rentals and what we should do as a Task Force. It was agreed that we should include this section in the Community Housing Needs Assessment. The committee agrees that short term rental is an important topic for this committee to talk about.

Discussion about Homelessness in Waterbury

A discussion was had about homelessness in Waterbury. The Task Force talked about the potential issues with the Motel Act ending and how this could affect Waterbury.

Review and discussion of potential agenda items for next meeting

- Housing Needs Assessment
- Housing Surveys
- Kane and Alyssa will talk about what data the town has on Housing.

Task Force logistics

- We will have out meetings on the Third Thursday of the month from 6pm to 8pm.
- Next meeting will be on Thursday, June 15th.
- Mark P. will send Kane S. data on short term rentals.
- The members will add potential survey questions to an existing google doc.
- Eliza N. will organize the google doc.
- Joe C. will do a deep dive on the Housing Community Needs Assessment.
- Mark P. will report the data on vacant commercial spaces that have potential to be converted into housing units.

Other business

(There was no other business.)

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Kane Sweeney and seconded by Joe Camaratta, none opposed. It passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:44pm