

South Kingstown Affordable Housing Collaborative
Thursday, September 23, 2010

Meeting Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the South Kingstown Affordable Housing Collaborative was held on Thursday, September 23, 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	Absent
John Taylor Ellis	Present	Geoffrey Marchant	Present
Jean Olivier Johnson	Absent	Paul Jordan	Present
Jean Paul Virgilio	Absent		

Staff member Vincent Murray, Director of Planning was also present.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chair Paul Jordan.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Archambault made a motion, Mr. Ellis seconded; motion carried: "To approve the minutes of the August 26, 2010 meeting as revised."

VOTE: Jordan – aye Archambault – aye Ellis – aye Marchant - aye

3. Process Discussion, Master Plan of Old North Village Comprehensive Permit Application, Proposed Four-unit Affordable Housing Development, 130 Old North Road, Kingston, AP 23-3, Lot 117, South County Habitat for Humanity, Applicant; URI Board of Governors, Owner

Staff provided a brief overview of the meeting based on discussions with Principal Planner Dennis Vinhateiro. Mr. Jordan also provided his perspectives as an attendee. He noted that the room was unbalanced insofar as more opponents than proponents of the project were present. He added that many of the issues raised were germane to the University presence in Kingston, i.e. traffic, and people were expressing frustration with current circumstances. In discussion members felt that this is a good project and the issues that have been raised in opposition needed to be considered generally but most were not project specific.

4. Advisory Review, Preliminary Plan of The Glen at Saugatucket, North Road, Peace Dale, AP 41-1, Lot 1, a Proposed Fourteen-lot/unit Residential Development (with Two Affordable Units Included), South County Sand and Gravel, Inc. Owner/applicant

The membership reviewed and discussed the proposed major subdivision entitled: “The Glen at Saugatucket,” AP 41-1, Lot 1, a proposed fourteen (14) unit residential development located on the westerly side of North Road in Peace Dale. As proposed, the project will contain two (2) affordable units. The project developer is South County Sand and Gravel, Inc.

Following its review Mr. Marchant made a motion, Mr. Archambault seconded; the Collaborative voted unanimously to support the project noting that the design and affordability component was compliant with the requirements of Article 5, Section 502.6 - *Inclusionary Zoning* of the Zoning Ordinance.

In discussion, the Collaborative also noted that the HOA (Homeowner’s Association) should be adequately capitalized on an initial basis so that operation/maintenance of the common OWTS would not be burdensome on the residents of the development.

Also discussed was the monitoring agent planned for the project which is the Housing Network of RI (Christine Hanifan). This group recently absorbed the CHLT (Community Housing Land Trust).

5. Discussion of Housing Issues, Policies and Priorities for Five-year Update of the Comprehensive Community Plan

- The majority still supports municipal focus on affordable housing, 70% + in survey.
- Education is a key on this issue to foster support and understanding by residents, developers, real estate professionals, etc.
- Family rentals remain an unmet need in the community.
- The Town should evaluate the current two-bed limit on many/most multi-household zoning allowances.
- There is a lack of apartments in town which is a strain on workforce housing and younger families’/persons’ ability to live and/or work here.
- More resources for housing rehabilitation would be desirable.
- Currently the Town has a lack of areas/parcels zoned for higher density housing (RM, R10); efforts to expand this resource should be undertaken.
- Infill reuse opportunities in Wakefield are the Branch property, Campus Cinema site, the area near Citizens Bank behind Benny’s and the bowling alley, and the Columbia Street corridor (Main Street to River Street).
- The area behind the Kenyon Law office (Narragansett Avenue East vicinity) is felt to have potential for multi-household or mixed (light commercial and multi household) uses.
- The Town could do more to permit/encourage small apartment development as an infill tool and to provide a variety of housing choices.
- The Town’s Comprehensive Community Plan should pre-suggest suitable areas for higher density housing.
- The Town’s GIS system should be used to assist planning studies to identify areas that have the potential to properly accommodate higher density and affordable housing.
- Cottage housing is viewed as a good vehicle to achieve some gains in affordable housing and as a means of quality infill.

6. Discussion of Town Web-site Posting Re: Public Education on Affordable Housing Issues

Collaborative members suggested the following additions to the Town website: to provide a link from the Latest News feature on the Affordable Housing page to the Housing Works RI website. (This new addition would be updated periodically to keep fresh.); to mention the new Latest News at Town Council meetings to encourage residents to access this new addition to the website.

7. Other Items of Concern and Interest

- There was a brief inquiry about a 20-unit addition proposed to LaCasa Elderly Section 202 Housing on Samuel Rodman Street.
- Mr. Ellis made a brief notation regarding proposed rehabilitation/reuse of 327 Kenyon Avenue as “supportive housing” under HUD Section “811” program. The property had formerly been a group home operated by the State. Members expressed a desire to tour the building. A Comprehensive Permit application is expected to be filed shortly.
- Discussion of the impact of foreclosures locally was reviewed. There have been 22 in South Kingstown during the current calendar year. This will be discussed further by AHC in upcoming meetings.
- There was a brief discussion of the upcoming election. Mr. Jordan and Mr. Ellis noted that many of the advocacy groups were posing questions to candidates to determine their positions on housing and homelessness issues.
- Mr. Archambault noted that he heard that the Palisades Mill was back on the market.
- Mr. Ellis made note of an upcoming workshop on October 29th from 9-12 at the Wiley Center, 1070 Main Street, Pawtucket entitled: “Strategic Communications for Social Change.”

8. Adjournment

Mr. Ellis made a motion, Mr. Archambault seconded; motion carried: “To adjourn.”

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.