

MINUTES

TOWN OF WALPOLE

Walpole Housing Partnership Meeting

November 17, 2020

Held via Zoom

Attendees:

Members:

Andrew Flowers, Willa Bander, Ben Barrett, Audrey Grace, Kurt Tommy, Philip Czachorowski (not sworn in, not voting)

Guests:

Denise Landry, Walpole Housing Authority Executive Director
Sarah Khatib, Walpole Planning Board

1. The meeting was called to order by Andrew Flowers, Chair, at 7:36 pm.

2. Reorganize and VOTE on Chair, Vice Chair, and Clerk.

Andrew Flowers was nominated and seconded at Chair.

VOTE: 5-0-0 UNANIMOUS

Willa Bander was nominated and seconded as Vice Chair.

VOTE: 5-0-0 UNANIMOUS

No one was nominated as Clerk. Philip Czachorowski volunteered to act as clerk until the next meeting.

Andrew Flowers reported that Elizabeth Barrows had submitted her resignation to the Select Board.

3. Discuss and VOTE on ld meeting minutes (if any)

No minutes were submitted for a vote.

4. Debrief on Articles 19 and 20 at Fall Town Meeting 2020

Andrew Flowers summarized his thoughts on the Town Meeting vote on Articles 19 and 20. He presented three options that the WHP could take in going forward in regard to increase affordable housing in Walpole:

1. Continue to get an Inclusionary Housing Zoning Bylaw passed
2. Initiate a new major proposal
3. Work on one of the smaller recommendations from the Housing Production Plan

There was a general consensus of support for Option 3.

Ben Barrett suggested looking at 40R zoning or an overlay district. He noted that the Select Board will be putting the Master Plan rewrite out for bid.

Andrew Flowers suggested that the WHP would want a voice on the Master Plan rewrite. He also noted an increase in evictions with COVID-19.

Sarah Khatib thought that the 40R Bylaw change would be too ambitious and an overlay district may be more practical to get passed.

Andrew Flowers suggested that Accessory Housing may be a more practical bylaw change to propose.

Audrey Grace suggested that the WHP do a postmortem on the IZ Bylaw articles. She said that it was important for people to know more about the IZ Bylaw and housing issues.

Ben Barrett agreed with Audrey.

Andrew Flowers said that the WHP should do a postmortem and concentrate on education.

Kurt Tommy said that a postmortem was needed to understand what is needed to get more support from the town for IZ

Ben Barrett noted that a majority of Town Meeting Members supported the IZ Bylaw so there is considerable support.

Andrew Flowers said that the Planning Board could have been working better with the WHP on the articles.

Denise Landry gave a summary of what the Walpole Housing Authority can do to help people facing eviction.

Willa Bander suggested that maybe the Town can start a fund to help people facing eviction.

Ben Barrett said that the town could create an account that people make contributions.

Philip Czachorowski offered that, given the scale of the problem, it will also require the state and even the town to allocate funding.

Andrew said that the committee should explore how Walpole can create an Emergency Rental Assistance Program. He will schedule the topic for January.

Willa Bander said that the town should lobby at the state level to increase funding for the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) Program and to simplify the application process.

Andrew Flowers was going to check with the Select Board to see if they would write a letter to the governor and legislature. Willa Bander is going to work with Ben Barrett to write a letter.

Ben Barrett said that the Select Board was going to ask the four State Representatives who represent Walpole to come to a Select Board Meeting. He is going to add emergency rental assistance and housing to the list of questions.

Andrew Flowers asked Denise Landry what is the vacancy rate for the Walpole Housing Authority. Denise Landry reported that by the end of the year (2020) all units will be occupied. The goal is to turn around a vacant apartment within 30 days. It can sometimes be longer due to the transition to a new state computer system and maintenance staffing.

Andrew Flowers stated that he will include these issues on the January WHP meeting:

- A discussion of Emergency Rental Assistance Programs.
- Path for moving forward on the IZ Bylaw

5. Old business

No old Business.

6. New business

No new Business.

7. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made a seconded.

VOTE: 5-0-0 UNANIMOUS

Minutes respectfully submitted by Philip Czachorowski

Minutes approved by Committee on: January 6, 2021

Chairperson Signature:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrew W. Flower". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.