

Notes

Housing Trust Fund Task Force Meeting #5

May 25, 2016

There was no quorum for this scheduled meeting. The following are notes covering the discussion that occurred among those in attendance.

Task Force members present: Charlie Magill, Ted Brady, and Jeff Fehrs

Staff Present: Rick McGuire, Town Manager; Ken Belliveau (joined the meeting at 8:00 a.m.)

Others Present: None

1) Minutes: May 25, 2016 - No action was taken.

2) Discussion:

Mr. Magill suggested having a general discussion about some of the key issues.

Mr. Brady stated that one issue is funding: how much is needed and where to best secure funds. He suggested on option are impact fees. Another option is local property tax which could be raised by placing an extra penny on the tax rate to support affordable housing.

Mr. Fehrs suggested offset fees, grants and donations as other possible sources. He noted it is difficult to know how much support might exist in the community using property taxes to support affordable housing. Mr. Fehrs said there is a need to point out the pros and cons of each funding source.

Mr. Brady suggested the difficulty will be in deciding what programs to fund. Mr. Fehrs suggested it is more important to establish the fund and begin to fund it and then determine uses as the money becomes available. He cited the example of the environmental reserve fund and support for the community for the fund even in the absence of specific projects.

Mr. McGuire suggested partnering with a group like the Champlain Housing Trust (CHT) He explained that the Trust could suggest specific programs given whatever general parameters the Town wishes to establish. CHT could then administer funding for the town and report the results.

Mr. Brady expressed some reservations about this approach noting it would reduce the amount of local control. He agreed with Mr. Fehrs and Mr. Magill that it was worth exploring this concept further. Mr. Magill suggested inviting a representative to the next Task Force meeting to discuss this concept further.

Mr. Fehrs suggested possibility of having a portion of the local options tax go to affordable housing. Mr. McGuire suggested one option is to take a portion of the rooms and meals tax each year for affordable housing.

Mr. Brady suggested the possibility of having one fund for both conservation and housing similar to the state model. There was some discussion concerning the pros and cons of this approach including possible opposition by the existing Conservation Commission but the feeling was this was worth exploring. Mr. McGuire mentioned that he has recently heard some argue that the need for an environmental reserve fund may be decreasing as the community is built out and given the amount of land already conserved.

The informal meeting ended at 8:40 a.m.

- 3) Next Meeting: The next meeting is to be determined.