

Housing Plan Implementation Committee (HPIC)
February 4, 2019
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Arlington Town Hall, First Floor Conference Room
MEETING SUMMARY

Attendees: Lourie August, Katie Einstein, Pam Hallett, Karen Kelleher, Syrl Silberman, Elise Selinger, Jenny Raitt, Patricia Worden, Erin Zwirko

Guests: Jo Anne Preston, Carl Wagner, Katiri Wagner

Jenny kicked off the meeting with a round of introductions. Four new members of the Housing Plan Implementation Committee were appointed by the ARB during mid to late 2018. Following the introductions, Jenny provided some background on the Housing Production Plan, which was adopted in 2016. The charge of the HPIC is to implement the Housing Production Plan. The five year plan identifies certain affordable housing goals including creating mixed-income housing, integration of affordable housing in the community, create an age-supportive community, identify zoning amendments, and increase capacity to create affordable housing.

There are also implementation strategies within the plan. The lead group for implementation is the ARB, with the support from the Department of Planning and Community Development. Jenny provided an overview of the implementation strategies and what has been accomplished to date. For example, the town has been support of the Housing Corporation of Arlington (HCA). HCA is planning for 57 new units within the community for households and individuals making 60% of the area median income. One unit of affordable housing has been created through inclusionary zoning. The Arlington Home Improvement Loan Program expanded the program to up to four unit buildings. The ARB adopted a policy to encourage more 3 bedroom units. On the zoning side, amendments to support mixed-use and transportation demand management have been adopted, and two significant packages are moving toward Annual Town Meeting in 2019: accessory dwelling units and amendments to facilitate the creation of multi-family housing. The HPIC has also provided educational forums.

The Committee then discussed how to expand on the strategies identified in the Housing Production Plan. Some suggestions that have been received in other forums include creation of cohousing and congregate housing, supportive housing, and giving a stronger voice to renters in the community. Patricia suggested that developer who develop more than 6 units in aggregate in a year should be required to contribute affordable housing. Some members of the committee believed that a requirement like that may not be supportive of financing models. Patricia also suggested that assisted living facilities should have affordable units at the existing facilities; however, it was noted that the housing model makes it very difficult to subsidize. Pam suggested that there needs to be more wrap around services provided in Arlington. Minuteman Senior Services can only provide so much.

Katie noted that there is engagement associated with the current efforts around the zoning amendments. There could be a more constructive dialogue to think about vision and how that links to the zoning amendments. Karen suggested that the community may need better information in order to create a sustained and comprehensive approach to talking about housing. Many people need to be educated about the housing crisis and many people have stories to tell about their own personal housing concerns, and those voices need to be brought to the table. Elise also noted that there are things that are within the town's control to do, and other issues that are beyond the town's control.

The Committee discussed options for upcoming meetings, and scheduled meetings on February 27 and March 20 at 7 PM. At the upcoming meeting, the Committee will discuss an action plan for the upcoming year.

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