

Housing Plan Implementation Committee (HPIC)
February 27, 2019
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Arlington Town Hall, First Floor Conference Room
MEETING SUMMARY

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

Guests: Gene Benson, Beth Melofchik, Jo Anne Preston

Jenny opened the meeting by explaining the purpose of the meeting was to develop an action plan for the Committee over the next year or so. Two to three objectives of the Housing Production Plan could be identified. Katie asked where the Department thinks a stronger focus could happen. Jenny suggested that supporting an aging community has not been a strong focus of the Committee. Health and Human Services has taken some initiative relative to this goal, but could also use fresh ideas. Katie noted that the accessory dwelling unit amendment fits into that goal. Elise suggested that the Committee should think of aging as a spectrum rather than referring to aging in place, which is not always possible due to health and physical ability. There needs to be different housing options for the spectrum. Lourie noted that many of the conversations that she has at the Council on Aging is supporting renters and homeowners to continue to live in the community. She suggested that the town needs to think more creatively about how to provide support.

There was some discussion about thinking about different types of units and how to preserve existing units in the community. Elise asked about land disposition, for which there are no current plans in Arlington. She also asked about tax title and foreclosure properties. Jenny explained that properties rarely get that far along in Arlington although there are vacant and underutilized properties. There is no trust fund set up either in Arlington, which might be a goal of the Committee. Patricia noted that the previous request to establish a trust fund was not approved by Town Meeting or supported at the time by the Select Board and ARB, so a future attempt needs to be carefully developed. Jenny agreed that it is worth looking at again in order to capture funds.

At a future meeting, the staff would present the necessary tasks to work toward these goals during 2019.

Moving to the accessory dwelling unit amendment, the Committee considered an affordable restriction, which tends to be the biggest limitation to developing accessory dwelling units. Barnstable had initially adopted the bylaw with an affordability restriction, but there was little interest in that requirement after the initial adoption. Patricia recommended that family members should be the tenants in the accessory unit; however, how family is defined has changed significantly that a limitation such as a relative would be limiting. Lourie agreed that it is too complex to require the average homeowner to maintain a deed restriction and the

annual certifications that go with it. Gene suggested that the homeowner may want to move into the smaller units, which would not work with affordable restrictions. There was also discussion about accessory dwelling units being used as short term rentals.

Jo Anne noted that currently additional living units can be created in existing structures without full kitchens. It prevents single-family homes becoming two-family homes. Jenny noted that the amendment provides a pathway to make these units code compliant and legal. Jo Anne also asked why accessory units could be considered affordable. Members of the Committee suggested that the smaller size, which is limited to 750 square feet in the amendment, would keep the rent lower than a unit in a larger multi-family structure.

Pam asked why detached structures are not included as an option for an accessory unit. Jenny indicated that the staff reworked the amendment presented to the ARB in late 2017 to an effort to make the amendment passable. Elise recommended that the amendment be expanded to include detached structures. Gene supported accessory units, but did not think the ARB would support detached structures.

Patricia recommended that there should be parking standard for accessory dwelling units. Jenny did not think that it would be necessary due to the amount of driveway and garage space generally seen in the single-family zoning districts.

Pam suggested that the Committee take a vote to recommend the amendment to the ARB. Pam made a motion to recommend that the ARB include detached structures that existed on site prior to February 14, 2019, endorse the requirement for an annual certification, the special permit process, and require the structure to be owner occupied as part of the proposed ADU amendment. Lourie seconded the motion. The vote was 5-1.

Finally, Gene presented his proposal to create a density bonus of the proposed amendments related to multi-family and mixed-use development. The greater density would be granted if additional affordable units were provided. Patricia noted that the existing density bonuses in the Zoning Bylaw are not used, and expressed strong opposition to a density bonus proposal. The rest of the Committee was generally in support of Gene's proposal.

Following this discussion, the Committee was also interested in working on anti-displacement measures to support Arlington residents.

Patricia made a motion to accept the meeting summary of February 4, 2019 with Lourie's edit. Elise seconded the motion. All present voted in favor.

The next meeting is March 20 at 7 PM. (Note: This meeting was subsequently canceled.)

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