

**Draft Hartford Committee on Housing and Homelessness  
October 19, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

**Attendance:**

Members: John Haffner (Chair), Nancy Trottier, Ally Tufenkjian (Selectboard Liaison) and Dan Nott

Lori Hirshfield (staff)

Public: Michael Redmond and Corrine Yonce

**1. Call Meeting to Order**

John Haffner called the meeting of the Hartford Committee on Housing and Homelessness (HCHH) to order at 6:05 PM, and read the public notice regarding a hybrid meeting format.

**2. HCHH Member to do Meeting Minutes**

Dan Nott took meeting minutes.

**3. Review Order of Agenda**

There were no changes.

**4. Approve September 21, 2023 Committee Meeting Minutes**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

**5. Public Comment**

There were no comments.

**6. Committee Member Openings Update**

John Haffner noted that the Town is still posting for the two openings and encouraged members to encourage interested people to apply to the Town Manager's Office.

**7. Champlain Valley Office of Economic Development (CVOEC) - Fair Housing Month Project**

John Haffner introduced Corrine Yonce who has been working at the CVOEO to coordinate local municipal housing committees at the state level. Corrine gave an overview of the of their work. They currently have a program to provide additional assistance to municipal housing committees, which includes workshops and resources. They have a housing ready toolkit (on website) to assist local housing committees to organize and address similar challenges and interests. She noted that today they hosted a meeting focused on Housing Trusts - how they form, how they work, and how to replenish and designate funds.

Corrine also spoke about their *Striving for Equity Project* which is working to build connections between housing committees across the state, and are hosting drop-in sessions to allow people to share their questions and successes. In addition, they also have informational sessions and planning workshops on various topics related to Housing Committees, like S100/Act 47, and how to work with Housing Data (Thursday, Nov 2nd, 12:00-1:30). She added that in December, Emily Hermann will be presenting on community engagement in municipal planning and reframing difficult topics.

She spoke about connecting with Housing Committees across the state to figure out how CVOEO can be most helpful. She showed a doc on the *Striving for Equity Project's* google drive where all the Housing Committee research and resources are being hosted and archived. (Interested people should email her for access.) She noted that there are many tools and resources which can be very helpful and to let CVOEO know if something is needed such as a sample RFP.

Corrine also spoke about a drop-in session (today) on housing trusts where Williston shared how they started a Housing Trust a few years ago with funds but has had complications with disbursing. Winooski has a housing trust but doesn't have a way to replenish the funds. Hinesburg has been thinking about starting a housing trust.

John noted that because the Hartford Committee is new in the process, and still learning about how to approach housing in the Town, seeing the resources CVOEO is putting together may be very helpful.

There was discussion about the Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP) where qualified housing projects can get up to a \$50k grant toward an accessory dwelling unit, tied to certain conditions for renting (such as income limits or renting to unhoused renters). There's also is a \$30k grant that has less stipulations.

Corrine provided the following links for more information.

Community drop-in and workshop schedule for this season:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GUaV9mtg0f7CvNaAF\\_qgj2VNL7C2YNS4MxC4Dv9gbJI/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GUaV9mtg0f7CvNaAF_qgj2VNL7C2YNS4MxC4Dv9gbJI/edit?usp=sharing)

Striving for Equity Project Summary:

<https://www.cvoeo.org/get-help/striving-for-equity-project>

Google Drive Resource Information:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1N8AjVM7EsaEopxCFwvTx-nSaSY6DFA68?usp=sharing>

## **8. Update on Housing Development Program**

Lori reported on the recent Selectboard conversations about the possible creation of a Town Housing Development Program, a pilot project focused on increasing ADU's and Missing Middle Housing, and provide technical assistance to the private sector to

develop housing. The idea builds on the workshops in May of this year which showed that people are interested and need support and technical assistance to start this process. Lori also is looking at how a Housing Development Program can help leverage conventional financing and other funding sources for individuals and businesses looking to develop housing. Scoping out a program also included a process for evaluating and approving funding applications, such as an advisory group that can help guide the development of the program. There was discussion about the HCHH being involved in the program development.

Lori noted some example programs she is looking into, such as the Mad River Valley Housing Coalition, a new Rutland revolving loan fund, Woodstock and the Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP) . There was discussion about the program focus and other resources. Lori added that one of the current challenges is the high cost of new construction which can be reduced by creating new housing by reconfiguring existing structures.

There was discussion if a housing development program should be focused on hiring someone to research and help people access grants rather than ARPA being the source of grants. There also was discussion that the source of much of this new housing funding is federal or state with complex structures, and uncertainty around how much would continue into the future. It also was noted that many of the grant funds go towards large scale projects and the current concept for a Hartford Housing Program is to incentivize private sector participation in creating small scale housing.

The Committee decided it would be helpful to provide guidance on the development of this new program. In order to move the process forward before the next meeting, John, Lori, Corrine and possibly Jennifer will meet to map out some more details prior to the next HCHH November meeting.

## **9. Town Plan Housing Chapter Update**

Lori reported that there will be a community meeting on November 9th, starting at 6:30 PM at the Bugbee Senior Center. She stated that they anticipate getting the draft to Planning Commission/Town Plan Steering Committee members by Monday, and provide it to the public in advance of the community meeting.

She also noted that a Request for Proposals to update the Town Plan Economic Development Chapter will be ready to go out in the following week.

## **10. News from Committee Members**

Lori reported The Vermont Futures Project is looking to have a regional community discussion in Hartford possibly on November 16<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup>. The VFP is about create a state-wide plan to grow Vermont.

Dan highlighted programs like Vermont Homeshare that can create low-barrier housing that doesn't require any additional construction to create new/more housing out of

existing housing. Vermont Homeshare is currently expanding into Windsor county.

Lori noted that she has proposed a FY2025 budget of \$1000 for the HCHH outreach and programming similar to other Town Committees.

## **11. Meeting Adjourned at 7:51 PM.**

### **Committee Members as of 10-19-2023**

John Haffner, Chair (through 12/12/2024)

Dan Nott (through 11/28/2024)

Jennifer Kravitz, Vice Chair (through 4/03/2025)

Nancy Trottier (9/18/2025)

Ally Tufenkjian, Selectboard Liaison

Vacant Position

Vacant Position

Lori Hirshfield, Staff Liaison