



Adopted 10-23-08

**Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee on Housing
7:30 a.m. – October 2, 2008
City Hall/City Manager's Conference Room**

Present: Councilor Christine Dwyer, Chairperson; Councilor Ken Smith; Dick Ingram; Jane James; William Gladhill; Cliff Sinnott; Kay Maneen; Cindy Hayden Deputy City Manager (Ex-Officio); and David Moore, Asst. Community Development Director (Ex-Officio). Also present was Jim Sheehan, Portsmouth Housing Authority.

1. **Call to Order** - Chairperson Dwyer called the meeting to order at approximately 7:35 a.m.
2. **Consideration of Minutes from September 18, 2008 Meeting** - The minutes of the September 18, 2008 Housing Committee meeting were accepted as presented.
3. **Review of discussion from the previous meeting: First-Time Homebuyers Program and Workforce Housing Trust Fund** - The Chair briefly reviewed the conversation from the previous meeting regarding a housing related impact fee and the first-time home buyer program and asked for additional comment from the Committee.

Dick Ingram felt they were important and should be on our list, the Committee agreed.

4. **Discussion of Rockingham Planning Commission/Workforce Housing Coalition regional housing forum (October 21st)** – Dick Ingram explained that there are two different sessions; one an overview of new housing laws, and the second a workshop for local officials and planners. The sessions will focus on SB342. Mr. Sinnott will discuss what communities can and should be doing. There will be a panel discussion showing three examples of what communities have been doing, in particular a small town example.

The Chair stated that she, David Moore and Jane James will attend the Workforce Housing session and Dick Ingram will attend the second session.

5. **Discussion of draft recommendations to the City Council** – Mr. Moore handed out a draft final report to the Committee. The Chair stated that she, David Moore and Cindy Hayden met with the City Manager in order to prepare this draft. The Chair explained that the Committee would discuss this draft today, changes would be made following the meeting, and a new draft report would be sent out prior to the October 23, 2008 meeting. The report is to be presented to the City Council at the November 24th Council meeting. Ms. Hayden suggested that, at the Council presentation, the Committee request a worksession to go over the recommendations in more detail. Such a worksession would likely be held in January or February of 2009.

The Committee reviewed the draft report. The Chair reviewed the report's organization and explained the desire to provide key information to the City Council in a succinct manner; including presenting key facts, housing principles, and recommended actions.

Several specific recommendations were made to improve "Key facts" section, including new information, additional data, and reordering existing information. Generally, the Committee sought to focus on workforce incomes which fall between 80% to 120% of Median Family Income.

The Chair emphasized the need for all recommendations to fit within the key facts and principles.

Ms. James raised the issue about who is expected to develop new units of housing. She said the report should address specifically who the partners are. Ms. Hayden clarified that the City's role is to leverage private investment for new housing units as opposed to developing and owning its own housing.

Councilor Smith stated that the Planning Board is in the middle of redrafting the zoning ordinance and some of the changes will facilitate development of new units by private developers.

Councilor Smith asked if the Committee would like to emphasize that the City is working to increase workforce housing for people who live here. He asked if the City is seeking to provide workforce housing for the Boston workforce or providing workforce for Portsmouth and our communities? In response, Ms. Hayden referred to the first time homeowners program, she indicated the City controls residency of the participants in that program. She said in the open market, it is difficult to control residency, unless the City's funds are injected.

Dick Ingram stated that people want to live where they work and we are trying to meet that desire. Cindy Hayden suggested adding a bullet under Principles stating "our goal is to provide workforce housing that meets the needs of Portsmouth".

The Chair said because our recommendations are also related to transit, suggested doing a separate bullet that really is about attempting principles that are related to sustainability.

The Chair spoke in support of the first recommendation saying that these recommendations hold the most potential for increasing the number of workforce housing units. She said she would like to see the City take a more proactive role by creating a workforce housing trust fund. She said the trust will enable the City to provide leadership, land and funding.

Cindy Hayden added that the City role described in the Trust section resembled what the City did when it partnered to create the Hometown Program, the Lafayette School Senior Apartments, and the Osprey Landing redevelopment among other projects. The Chair indicated that this leadership was being applied to create units of housing for the workforce income level versus households earning less than 60% of Median Family Income.

Ms. Maneen suggested that the Committee specifically refer to private developers when it refers to "other partners" in the report.

The Chair moved on the recommendation pertaining to Mixed Use Redevelopment.

Mr. Sinnott said it has to be woven into their process for revisiting their land use plan, when they are actively updating their land use which they are doing now.

Cindy Hayden feels it is misleading to call high priorities, medium priorities, we need to come up with different terms.

Councilor Smith would like to see the long term planning for Pease move into the high priorities, feels we need to stay on top as the whole area is in flux.

Mr. Sinnott suggested the Committee encourage inclusion of both market rate and workforce housing options. He said the Pease Development Authority might be more receptive to housing for all income levels. The Committee felt this was a good idea.

Ms. Maneen suggested that City-owned parcels of land, which have development constraints and can't be developed, be sold to developers to combine that land with other parcels. Parcels would be returned to the tax rolls, and may assist in developing a project which might otherwise not have adequate open space. The idea of selling parcels in support of the Housing Trust fund was viewed favorably.

The Chair had another commitment, and before leaving, indicated that she believed the report should address how the Committee reviewed extending the Residential Density Incentive - Planned Unit Development Ordinance to other zones. However, upon review, the Committee determined that this would not result in a meaningful number of additional housing units.

Ms. Hayden asked if there were any comments on home sharing. Mr. Gladhill asked if there were any areas where this would work. Ms. Hayden responded that homesharing programs are administratively intensive and need to be regional. She said Portsmouth alone does not have a sizable enough population to warrant the investment. She said home sharing is essentially a matchmaker service for people who want to share their home for any number of reasons. She said, if the City could find an appropriate regional partner, the City could play a role in it.

Ms. Hayden reviewed the section on accessory apartments. She said several issues need to be addressed, including parking, concerns about noise, impact on property values, expanding building footprints, and overall effects on single family neighborhoods. The Committee recommended exploring the accessory apartment issue with these concerns in mind.

Cindy Hayden referred to the continuation of first-time homebuyers program, Home Town. There were 85 households that have been assisted since 1989 providing approximately \$1.2 million in subsidies.

The Report Back to Council will be redrafted and presented for final review at the next meeting scheduled for October 23, 2008 at 7:30 a.m. in the City Manager's Conference Room.

6. Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,
Elaine E. Boucas, Recording Secretary