

TOWN OF WASHINGTON
Washington Housing Commission
Meeting Minutes
October 11, 2022

All Meetings are subjected to the approval by the Washington Housing Commission

1. Call to Order: 5:30 PM

Members Present: Judie Gorra, Darryl Wright, Robert Woodruff, Henrietta Small

Staff: Michelle Gorra

Public: Joan Lodsins, Lindsay Larson, Linda Zukauskas, Chris Charles, Carrie Lloyd

- 2. Motion to accept the minutes of the August 1st, 2022 meeting;** It was agreed there needs to be a change to one sentence in the last month's minutes to make it clearer. Woody, made the motion, Henrietta seconded, all in favor.

3. Review of program Kate Johnson-

Everyone was very impressed with the program and were all very excited about the turn out. There were 20 people in the room, and also at least 20 people online watching it via zoom. There was also had someone from every commission watching the presentation which was very encouraging.

4. Chairperson's report

Work which has been done by the Zoning subcommittee on PA 21-29 as it relates to multi-family housing - Judie and Woody have been working on this. One of the things they have been talking about is a floating zone vs an overlay zone, we haven't come to a conclusion about this. Some of the questions about this is, where would it make sense to have a zone? nothing has been set in stone yet. One thought is to have the zones where they would be close to or on one of the state roads that go through the town of Washington to give reasonable access to work etc. There's lots to consider, there were multifamily regulations at one point but they were eliminated 30ish years ago.

One thing that was brought up with new engineering is that it is possible to have more homes on a particular piece of property than there were 20 years ago, so that's something we're looking at now too. Also Looking at Roxbury, Kent and Bridgewater's regulations as well

5. Report by Michelle Gorra on a meeting which was held with personnel from Habitat for Humanity.

Interesting meeting, going to start breaking ground on 2 new houses on Myfield Road. Habitat is going to be looking for volunteers. The commission wants to start engaging some homeowners so they can put in some sweat equity. We've been adding it to the selectmen's email to get the word out, some of its skill and work and labor that they need. We're in the Housatonic Habitat for Humanity. One of the homes that resold that didn't have to stay affordable" sold for \$309,000 - which wouldn't meet the criteria for affordable housing. Darryl reached out to the schools with his company to see if any kids at the schools would like to help out and learn some electric skills. The criteria to become a homeowner are online regarding income levels, sweat equity.

If you want to make a house affordable its more than the materials, it's the upkeep. We should consider asking about adding solar to them, would like to reach out to Habitat and see their thoughts on this idea. Daryl and Chris could possibly invite them to the commission, or we may share what we learned, Daryl will talk to Peter about the idea of solar on the homes on Myfield. Only four of the lots were deemed as affordable housing out of the 13 lots. The idea of this mission was to have it as a mixed community. Habitat's the goal isn't to make housing affordable in perpetuity, the mission is to allow the first family to get into the house and build some equity. Unfortunately, they're not all capital a affordable but they're modest little homes on small lots. Will hand out flyers about the workshop hoping to get the word out.

6. New Business - Consideration of a request to the ARPA Committee for funds for Baldwin Hill Property.

The Housing Commission is putting in a request to the ARPA committee for \$7,000 for feasibility on the 77 Baldwin Hill property. She talked to Bill Fairbairn and the Housing Trust is requesting ARPA money for repairs on other properties. Judie Gorra is putting in the request for what it costs for the most recent project to do the test holes etc. The request has to be in by October 15th. The community need being addressed needs to be stated in the application and Judie will refer back to the Housing Plan. The lot is 3 or 4 acres with nothing on the lot. Hoping to get 2 houses, maybe 3. Would be wonderful to get at least 2 houses on that lot.

Woody made a motion to approve this request, Darryl seconded. all in favor.

7. Visitors Lindsay, started a new position and wants to help the commission with their mission- she's working now at Litchfield County Center for Housing Opportunity, funded by the Department of Housing. Lindsay is available to help up to 10 housing groups. Available to help with anything we may need the goal is getting affordable housing built more quickly.

8. Motion to adjourn at 6:31. Judie Gorra made the motion, Woody seconded all in favor

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda K. Real
Selectman's Assistant

Zoom Recording: <https://youtu.be/dtqXI64Qlgs>