

***Committee to Assess and Recommend Strategies for Housing Creation Within the
Town***

Selectmen's Conference Room 2nd Floor Town Hall Building
367 Main Street Hyannis, MA 02601

Rick Presbrey: Chair
Councilor Paula Schnepf
Councilor Betty Ludtke
Councilor Charles Bloom
Councilor John Crow
Councilor Gordon Starr
Maryann Barboza
Hilda Haye
Laura Shufelt

July 18, 2024
5:00PM

MEETING MINUTES

Administrator for the Town Council opened the meeting of the Committee to Assess and Recommend Strategies for Housing Creation Within the Town and made the following announcement:

This meeting is being recorded and will be rebroadcast on the Town of Barnstable's Government Access Channel. In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A, Section 20, the Administrator must inquire whether anyone else is recording this meeting and, if so, please make their presence known. This meeting will be replayed via Xfinity Channel 8 or high-definition Channel 1072. It may also be accessed via the Government Access Channel live video on demand archives on the Town of Barnstable's website: <https://streaming85.townofbarnstable.us/CablecastPublicSite/?channel=1>

The administrator to the Town Council took Roll call, all members present in the Selectmen's Conference Room except for Councilor Gordon Starr

Also in Attendance were Kathleen Connolly, Assistant Town Attorney and James Kupfer, Assistant Director, Planning and Development.

Members of the Public in person and via zoom: Jillian Douglass, (just listening)

PURPOSE: Recommend strategies for the creation of housing to serve year-round residents and seasonal workers. The committee shall review the Cape Cod Commission's Regional Housing Strategy, <https://www.capecodcommission.org/our-work/regional-housing-strategy> and the proposed Massachusetts State Housing Bond Bill <https://www.mass.gov/lists/housing-bond-bill> and the Town's Housing Production Plan, <https://www.townofbarnstable.us/Departments/planninganddevelopment/Projects/Housing-Production-Plan-Update.asp> with a goal of recommending 2-4 strategies for the Town to adopt, along with recommendations for implementation and resources needed.

Administrator opened the floor for nominations for Chair of the committee. Laura Shufelt nominated Councilor Paula Schnepf, this was seconded by Hilda Haye; Councilor John Crow nominated Rick Presbrey, this was seconded by Councilor Betty Ludtke. Councilor Ludtke asked for discussion on the nominations before voting.

Mr. Presbrey started by saying he has been a long-time advocate for housing and placing individuals in housing, that was always his goal, was to place people in housing because everyone deserves a roof over their head. He has always lived his life to help people, he is a creative thinker, and cares about housing. 40B projects were designed to give towns the ability to build housing for those in needs. He sees the following as a real problem

Those that can't afford housing

Low paying jobs that people work in that can't afford housing

Professionals that make good money that still can't afford housing

Councilor Schnepf works with Housing and has also been a Town Councilor who has tried to push that agenda along on the Town Council, which is the need for housing, some of the Zoning by laws that we were able to put in place has given homeowner the opportunity to create by right ADU's (accessory dwelling units) that were more affordable for our residents. As a past Housing Authority Board member here in Barnstable, and now currently Executive Director in Sandwich, which she is retiring from at the end of August, she also has extensive experience in the Housing areas. This Committee has been something that she has tried to get started for a long time and was glad when the Town Council President took up her suggestion to form this Committee. Councilor Schnepf's vision for this Committee moving forward is very short-term strategic plan, not here for a long time, we are here to analyze the information mentioned in the Charge of this committee, which was given to us, make sure the public also has input in the suggestions we formulate to prepare to be given to the full council for consideration. Councilor Schnepf would like to see the committee focus on affordable housing, and we might have to determine what the word affordable means. This Committee should look at the documents given to us and come up with suggestions from each for discussions, Councilor Schnepf has prior experience in being a Chair of a committee, and she feels its all about giving every member a voice on the committee and listening to the public and coming to consensus and putting those ideas into recommendations to be given to the full Council for consideration. Councilor Schnepf thanked the staff for supporting this committee as we go forward and would also suggest inviting future guests to come and speak, as she understands the Local Comprehensive Planning Committee has also looked at this so it would be great to hear from one of them as we go forward.

Members of the committee offered discussion on each candidate, Maryann Barboza said this was going to be a very hard decision for Chair as each individual is a very strong person, she will vote for Mr. Presbrey only because he was the very first person that helped her years ago and continues to do so now even though he is no longer in that role. She has the utmost respect and love for Councilor Schnepf because of her passion for housing, and her years of work in it, but she knows Mr. Presbrey a little more and sees his passion, and when he sets his minds to getting something done, he gets it done, and she is only speaking from experience in years with working with him side by side.

Councilor Ludtke thanked each individual for speaking to members and explaining their past, because she believes its important to get to know each other on this Committee and it gives us a perspective as to who each of you are, so she thanked the two candidates for doing this. Councilor Ludtke asked if the other members could do the same so we all get familiar with each other.

Maryann Barboza- longtime resident Hyannis, generations of family lived here, grandmother, great grandmothers, and their mothers before them all from here. Everything she is involved in in the town she fights with passion from the heart, her very first encounter with racial discrimination was when she was in grade school and she was kicked off the bus by an individual that was white, who used a racial slur to tell her she was not entitled to sit there, from that moment on, she has fought every battle of discrimination with passion and heart. She believes in whatever lives lives. She has always been a voice for those that do not have one, she is who she is, she will never change.

Councilor Bloom- has been a Social worker for the first half of his career, second half was a Counselor, he knows Rick Presbrey and his past experience working with Housing, Councilor Bloom had a cousin that was a Town Councilor and he and his mother (who had Alzheimer's) would watch the Town Council meetings because this is how she would see her nephew, and it brought her into reality thinking, so Councilor Bloom had extra time on his hands and decided to run for Councilor in Precinct 9.

Councilor Ludtke- is a Councilor in the greater western portion of Hyannis, work history, 30 years in the military, and a pilot for 6 years, 4 kids that attend school here, Councilor Ludtke grew up in Western part of Mass, but summered here with family and believes she too brings the same generational experience as though that have lived here year round, the summer residents are just as passionate about the area they live in and have a vested interest just like those that are year round residents, very happy to be serving on this AD HOC Committee, and believes either candidate nominated tonight would be great in the role.

Councilor John Crow- has lived here for 26 years, Councilor in Precinct 5 which is primarily Osterville, but has a small portion in the western area of Marstons Mills, he grew up in Connecticut, worked for Federal Express for 30 years and moved a lot and was eventually transferred to Cape Cod and fell in love with the area. He understands he will always be a wash ashore, but he has a passion for those that need housing, he understands the struggle, as he was part of that struggle early in his life. He would like to see less affordable housing, and more low-income housing, what is considered affordable is not, and it is not hitting the market on who really needs it. If this Committee thinks outside the box, there are some things that can be achieved, and it fits the style of each village.

Hilda Haye, current Chair of the Housing Committee for the Town of Barnstable, works for Cape Cod Healthcare as a phlebotomist for 17 years, and has lived on Cape Cod for over 20 years; has three children and 5 grandchildren, currently resides in Centerville, but has experienced near homelessness when the apartment building, she resided in caught fire and became unlivable with no where to go, and no housing available to go to, every time she applied for help she was told she made too much money to qualify, she would ask what is too much money as a single mother supporting three children. I work a lot and invest in my community, and when my time came to ask for help, there was no one there to offer it. We have to come together and work together in Barnstable to make things happen faster, we have a great bunch of people in this community, but we need to get moving on the housing, there is such a need.

Laura Shufelt- grew up in Hyannis and lived in a house where the Hospital now is, the neighborhood no longer exists as it was taken over by doctor offices and medical buildings. Ms. Shufelt is now living in West Barnstable, her husband was the Harbormaster in Barnstable for years, and recently retired. Ms. Shufelt currently works for Mass Housing Partnership in Boston; she helps communities achieve affordable housing in their communities. Has worked in professional housing organizations since 1991, housing has always been a passion of hers, also knows about struggling families lived in a time when the phone company went on strike and her family had to worry if there would be food on the table or if they would lose their home. She nominated Councilor Schnepf because of her passion for housing and her professionalism and her ability to lead and chair a committee. She would like Mr. Presbrey to be an advocate and not a Chair, because as a Chair, you're limited to doing certain things as Chair.

The administrator announced there were two nominations on the floor to vote on, Councilor Schnepf and Mr. Presbrey for Chair.

Those voting for Councilor Schnepf were Laura Shufelt, Hilda Haye, and Councilor Schnepf.

Those voting for Mr. Presbrey were Councilor Ludtke, Councilor Crow, Maryann Barboza, Councilor Bloom, Mr. Presbrey

Mr. Rick Presbrey is the Chair of the Committee. He believes the job before this committee is very hard, we not only need to make sure that the Council and the Community are supportive of what the outcome of this committee is, but we also need to make sure it's achievable. This topic has always been an uphill battle. We need to identify that first, is priorities and what is achievable. He asked that everyone be honest with him, and if there is an issue you bring it to his attention, even if the problem is him, he does not want politics to enter into this at all, we need to decide what is the priority, once that is decided then everything around it will develop.

Administrator explained to the members the documents before them are what are mentioned in the Charge

Jake Dewey- encourages the committee members to gain speed as this is a crisis, the sunset deadline is coming near, and he would like to see policy change, and year round property exemption, and how to keep what we have, as we loose units every month due to property tax increases, you cant rent a unit at a price that is reasonable, we are losing money as renters and developers.

Mr. Presbrey would like to ask Mr. Dewey back for discussions since he is both a developer and landlord in Barnstable.

Mr. Morin has known Mr. Presbrey for a long time and will communicate his concerns going forward to the Chair, only because he is familiar with him, and will offer his help in any way he can

Chris Gregory, would like the committee to remain cognizant when the meetings are scheduled, currently the times chosen are not a good hour for the public to attend, as you can see I have a baby strapped to me, my job allows this flexibility but others do not, so if you want reach an intended audience, you are not going to capture them at this time. He would like to see this committee work with the zoning committee, coming up with SMART goals that all can agree on so at the end the proposals are not contradicting each other, he would like to see the Affordable Housing defined, what is affordable housing. Once you define it, then possible lowering the cost by 10 percent because what is defined currently as affordable no one can afford. Try and make sure that you are talking to the individuals that really need the housing, understand why someone rents the house for short term rather than long term, but mostly the two committees working together to come up with solutions.

Mr. Presbrey mentioned he has been in meetings regarding the 14+ acres of Marstons Mills property and was shocked to see how many people did not want housing out there, and he can respect those that think that way, he would like to see all the Villages in Barnstable understand the need for housing. He can't understand why others are not worried about others, and how having no housing affects us all, and we need to be understanding of those that have homes that are not in need and don't understand. It's a delicate balance.

Mr. Presbrey asked how often this committee wanted to meet, Councilor Bloom mentioned that we just heard the urgency from Mr. Dewey that we get this done. Maryann mentioned this is a crisis, and we need to come up with solutions for all those sleeping on the streets that no longer have a table to sit down at, its not just individuals, its families as well.

Mr. Presbrey mentioned the meeting time be later, all members agreed to meet at 6pm on days for the Public. The Administrator of the Town Council mentioned that we are limited to the Hearing Room and staff being available after 6pm, so the members need to look at the calendar sent to all by IT Department on availability. The Committee members decided that the next meeting would be July 31, 2024 in the Hearing Room at 5pm.

A motion was made by Councilor Paula Schnepf, this was seconded by Councilor Bloom, all members voted in favor of adjournment at 6:00pm

ADJOURNMENT 6:00pm