

Chittenden County Housing Convening – 3/29/21

Held Virtually via Zoom from 6pm to 7:30pm

Attendees:

Todd Rawlings, Burlington CEDO
Sarah Carpenter, VT Rental Housing Advisory Board and Burlington City Council
Jacki Murphy, Colchester Selectboard, CCRPC Board
Owiso Makuku, Essex Community Development Director
Darren Schibler, Essex Planner
Diane Clemens, Essex Junction Planning Commissioner
Carl Bohlen, Hinesburg Affordable Housing Committee
Mary Beth Bowman, Hinesburg Affordable Housing Committee
Bob Robbins, Board of Directors Chair of Champlain Housing Trust, and Jericho Affordable Housing Committee
Casey McNeil, Shelburne Housing Subcommittee
Pam Brangan, Shelburne Housing Subcommittee and CCRPC Staff
Alicia Simmons, Shelburne Housing Subcommittee
Julie Gaboriault, Shelburne Housing Subcommittee
Dean Pierce, Shelburne Planning Director, and Staff to the Shelburne Housing Subcommittee
Jim Duncan, Winooski City Council
Mike O'Brien, Winooski Planning Commission, CCRPC Board Chair
Robert Millar, Winooski Housing Commission
Leslie Black-Plumeau, VHFA, So. Burlington Affordable Housing Committee and Winooski Housing Committee
Sandra Dooley, So. Burlington Affordable Housing Committee
Jess Hyman, CVOEO Fair Housing Project
Rachel Batterson, VT Legal Aid
Regina Mahony, CCRPC Staff
Taylor Newton, CCRPC Staff
Unaffiliated/Unknown: Harrison Martin...

NOTES:

- I. **Welcome** by Regina Mahony
- II. **ECOS 2020 Annual Report & Looking Forward to the Next ECOS Plan**, *Regina Mahony*
 - a. Presentation on the 2020 ECOS Annual Report – it has a specific focus on Racial Equity and COVID-19 Impacts. Regina Mahony reviewed the pieces specific to housing. See attached slides.
 - b. CCRPC will soon be starting the ECOS Plan Update. Regina Mahony reviewed the housing goal, key issues, and strategy/actions from the last plan. See attached slides. The attendees provided feedback on what could be done at the regional level and in the next plan:
 - Dean Pierce, Shelburne – **should regional plan consider targets for each community?** Discussion followed around pros and cons and history of the issue. Generally received as a way to help communities take equitable ownership and have measurable goals, especially for affordable housing development. Specific comments included:
 - Owiso Makuku, Essex – could be helpful. Number from neutral source
 - Darren Schibler, Essex – what would the number be?
 - Leslie Black-Plumeau – helpful to set numeric targets. Could be bottom up. The Building Homes Together campaign target didn't influence the vacancy rate. Need to be more ambitious.
 - Diane Clemens, Essex Junction – Having a target and being able to explain what other municipalities are doing could be very helpful. Could help her to explain that they aren't the only municipality building, and building affordable housing. Would be helpful to know what number of bedrooms will be needed – seeing a lot of studios and 1 bedrooms being built.

Mike O'Brien – when CCRPC put out the targets the first time (early 2000s) affordable housing was all on the backs of Winooski & Burlington; and that probably isn't the case anymore.

Owiso Makuku, Essex – It would be helpful for everyone to be able to see the data and numbers of where the affordable housing is.

Carl Bohlen, Hinesburg – from a Committee member standpoint I would love it. View as a fair share. Also it's about a lack of money. Can we try to figure out County-wide funding?

Darren Schibler, Essex - starting to look at how we can raise funds for housing trust fund.

Leslie Black-Plumeau – establishing goals for total housing supply would be helpful too because local committees can't necessarily influence affordable housing.

Bob Robbins, Jericho – there are pockets of affluent homes, but very little affordable in his area.

Dean Pierce, Shelburne – even if we build more they are selling at really high prices. In normal times if we build more it would have an influence on lowering costs. But it doesn't seem like we can make that happen without lower income targets.

Taylor Newton, CCRPC – resources you have more control over – infrastructure water/sewer, and access funding to address the infrastructure. Other thing is land – municipalities own land.

Sandra Dooley, So. Burlington – posted in the chat - The "methodology" for SoBu's targets (which are in our Comp Plan) was to maintain the proportion of affordable housing units that were present in our community when the targets were established. What we were seeing was that virtually all new units were way above affordable and we wanted to keep this situation from getting worse. We also believed that this was a good marketable plan. We were trying to stay as affordable as we were at that time and not "overrun" our housing stock with affordable housing. Unfortunately, we have not been able to meet our targets so far, but we are making progress.

Jacki Murphy, Colchester - posted in the chat - is there any hope for some of Federal COVID \$\$ to help increase bonds for affordable housing construction? Regina stated yes; some of this funding will definitely be going to housing.

III. **April is Fair Housing Month**, *Jess Hyman Director of the Fair Housing Project at CVOEO*

April is Fair Housing Month - check out the events here: <https://fairhousingmonthvt.org/>. A lot of different types of events are happening, including some municipalities (Burlington & Montpelier) are doing a Fair Housing Declaration.

On April 28th – VCDP funding program is hosting a **fair housing training**. It's open to any municipal official: <https://accd.vermont.gov/content/fair-housing-training-2021>

Housing Commission Toolkit - <https://www.housingdata.org/toolbox/steps-for-municipalities> - review and let CVOEO know what information is missing from the toolkit.

IV. **Municipal Round Table** (30 minutes) – latest things you are working on, issues/challenges/successes:

Winooski – Tying up loose ends on housing trust fund. Trying to address needs of large families with housing (most new housing seems to be 1-2 bedroom/studios). Making use of municipal land for affordable housing development – two family units for homeownership. Parking also is a big issue the City is trying to deal with. Rental registry has been helpful in addressing housing quality. Going to be updating those ordinances soon. Also looking at historic preservation.

South Burlington – sponsored a book discussion on The Color of Law with the library and Jess Hyman. Using opportunities like the book discussion and other activities to build housing awareness; encouraging inclusionary zoning in parts of the city that don't currently have it with the goal of making it city-wide.

Shelburne – guest speaker from Habitat for Humanity at a recent meeting shared struggles/goals (organization struggles with finding land); existing zoning and form-based code to streamline housing development; and discussed looking at duplexes again after not successful on that earlier.

Jericho – proposal for inclusionary zoning; conducting survey around ADUs and providing more access to homeowners; commercial district housing development opportunity though infrastructure is an issue; reviewing obstacles to good intentioned housing proposals that have not been approved.

Hinesburg – committee expanded to seven; agenda item to create a video on accessory apartments to encourage development; project approved with inclusionary zoning (1 unit out of 9 total units). They are working with CHT to find a tenant. They are monitoring the affordable housing pieces of two big housing developments.

Essex – housing commission survey of other housing commission activities and formed working groups to review new strategies (inclusionary zoning, housing trust fund, ownership vs. rental, landlord survey and rental registry with focus on health and safety); passed town center master plan. FYI - VPA is organizing an Aging in Place workshop.

Colchester – the Town doesn't have a housing commission. Joined out of own curiosity. Fort Ethan Allen – CHT bought and being rehabbed. SLB helped acquire funding. New construction in growth center that will include affordable and market rate.

Burlington – Passed just cause eviction provision; settlement for City Place but lawsuit continues regarding parking (the new proposal is for over 420, and 20% affordable); owner occupancy requirements for short term housing. Growth in housing trust fund; 2020 voters approved increasing dedicated tax which brings housing trust fund to \$450K/year; increase to housing trust fund expected with in lieu payments allowed instead of inclusionary zoning; housing trust fund provides priority to permanently affordable housing.

Sarah Carpenter, VT Rental Housing Advisory Board - State house bill update - S79 legislation would remove requirement of health review to fire safety if not already; requirement for statewide rental registry.

V. Poll Questions –

Next Meeting Date: September options clear winner.

Potential Topics: Housing Trust Fund – when to use, funding source etc.

Links from meeting/discussion:

Very helpful new housing website: Local Housing Solutions <https://www.localhousingsolutions.org/>

Fair Housing Month <https://fairhousingmonthvt.org/>

Fair housing training <https://accd.vermont.gov/content/fair-housing-training-2021>

Housing ready toolbox <https://www.housingdata.org/toolbox/steps-for-municipalities>