

Falls Village Affordable Housing Plan Task Team

Minutes August 4, 2021

Members Present:

Felicia Jones

Daly Reville

Colter Rule

Julia Olf

Eric Carlson

Kathleen Clark

Abigail Marcelo Horace

Greg Marlowe

Member(s) of the public: Pat Mechare

Planning Consultant, Janell Mullen, began the meeting at 7:04 pm by asking the members present if they wanted to speak. Mullen took the opportunity to reiterate that the affordable housing plan process was by no means an evaluation of the River Road Homes project.

Mullen moved on to Item #1 of the Agenda, which was goal setting. The group agreed that the purpose of the plan was to diversify housing options so that seniors can age in place, new families can come to Town, and that workers of the region could find a place to live. The goal of the plan is to enable housing options across a spectrum of incomes.

Next, members of the group shared their ideas around housing strategies. Felicia Jones suggested zoning reform to more easily allow for accessory apartments. She also suggested user friendly documents for residents regarding housing options. She suggested the Planning and Zoning Commission revisit the regulations to make multifamily housing of 2-4 more easy to achieve. She also suggested they look at lot size and potentially minimize it.

Mullen mentioned the recent legislative update that mandates that accessory apartments be allowed "by right" unless a municipality chooses to opt-out. Mullen suggested that a strategy in the plan suggest to the P&Z to encourage the Town not to opt-out of the new legislation.

Kathy Clark suggested the plan lobby the state to include accessory apartments in their count towards affordable housing. Even if each one counted as 0.5 unit. She also mentioned the Rec Center land as an options with existing nearby amenities. Mullen mentioned that the plan can include a follow up action step as "evaluate and identify a property for feasibility with regards to building housing".

Daly Reville mentioned local housing assessment and tracking would be helpful so that an understanding of who needs affordable housing was more clear.

The group then moved onto Agenda Item #3 to discuss possible targets regarding units. Clark began with the 10% of the housing stock suggestion, which was 80. Other members of the group made their suggestions which ranged from 40-7.5. Adam Sher suggested the group meet in the middle.

Mullen asked for public comment. Pat Mechare spoke up addressing some concerns with the suggested locations including Page Road and the Town Garage. She acknowledged all of the hard work of the group.

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 pm.