

Islesboro Housing Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, January 24, 2023
In-Person Meeting at 5:00 PM, Town Office

APPROVED

4/18/23

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chair Mike Nelson called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

2. Establishment of a Quorum

Quorum was established with over 4 members present

Members Present: Mike Nelson, Rick Rogers, Tom Tutor, Ginnie Hess, and Michael Hutcherson.

Members Absent: Dave Dyer, John Kauer, and Melissa Burns, Ex Officio

Others Present: Lauren Bruce

3. Approval of minutes of October 25, 2022

Rick corrected 3rd bullet on page 3. It should read "Tom stated..."

Motion: To approve Minutes of October 25, 2022, as amended, R. Rogers, seconded by M. Hutcherson. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.

4. Status of "Housing Resource Guide"

- Lauren reported that the website has not been started yet. Lauren asked for input for sections/headings on the website.
- Ginnie suggested a section on Financing.
 - Ginnie reported that a mortgage banker, Jo Geddis, did a presentation on financing options and grants for first-time homebuyers at their real estate office, and the head broker suggested doing a similar Lunch & Learn on the island.
- Others suggested resource links for the website, including mortgage calculator, credit history, local realtors' info, etc.
- Rick stated he had sent Melissa a link to some resources for renters.
- Tom said he spoke with Tina and Page, and was told that linking to the Town website wouldn't be a problem.
- Rick suggested going to MaineHousing.org for resources.
- Ginnie reported that Rental Beast is up and running. It doesn't list short-term rentals (under 30 days). Landlords and renters are vetted.
- Michael Hutcherson suggested adding resources for people who own property and are interested in renting it out—what rights does each party have, lease guidelines, wizard, etc. Some property owners are resistant to renting, in part because doing it properly requires some work. Maybe adding resources for them would be worthwhile.
- Ginnie added that the Maine Attorney General's lease is very thorough. It helps the landlord understand rights and responsibilities and the particular laws.

5. Update on discussion with Island Institute Fellow

Islesboro Housing Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, January 24, 2023
In-Person Meeting at 5:00 PM, Town Office

- Melissa was absent and couldn't update.
6. Issues impacting prior multi-unit plan
- Tom reported that he wasn't able to reach J.T. via email.
 - Mike stated it would be helpful to understand the roadblocks he faced. Lauren replied that she is aware of some of the roadblocks. J.T. couldn't get the Fire Marshall to respond at all. Lauren offered to go to Chellie Pingree and try to get someone to get the Fire Marshall to respond, but he didn't want us to do that.
 - Tom thinks this might be a better time, and will try again.
7. Update on research about small community actions to address housing issues
- Mike and Rick have done some research on what small communities do in the area of housing.
 - Mike will forward the links and info on Genesis that Rick sent him.
 - Mike also looked generically at rural and small communities. A lot of good words, but not a lot of good actions. One of the things that pops up, especially in Maine, is a drive to corral rentals. Peaks Island and South Portland voted down short-term rentals, and Bangor is actively looking at doing the same. Most of the short-term rentals on Islesboro are seasonal anyway and couldn't be used for long-term rentals.
 - Ginnie added that on the mainland especially, a lot of investors were snatching up houses and turning them into short-term rentals, which was hurting the market.
 - Mike stated that many municipalities brought public land into the discussion and made it available for construction.
 - Rick mentioned that Liza from Genesis asked if the island has property that's recovered for taxes, and if the island be willing to donate that for construction of affordable housing. That's one of the ways to dramatically lower the cost of the housing.
 - Mike added that the cost of construction on the island is a huge barrier, as well as availability of contractors.
 - Mike stated he tried to reach Lauren's contact person on Chebeague but hasn't heard back.
 - Discussion on infrastructure and health care are issues. Some towns are adjusting zoning, and some are encouraging multi-family units. But you need to find someone to develop it. Land prices here are high, and they're not in areas where we can get a zoning change for multi-family.
 - There are some State programs that incentivize projects, but it's hard to find successful models.
 - Discussion about Durkee's store and land. Tom stated that he spoke with Richard, and let him know that IESC would be willing to help somehow. If IESC were to buy the land, they would do it with an easement that makes it so it could only be subdivided for permanent year-round housing.
 - Rick stated that the Genesis people offered to come out and do a presentation, but it might be best to wait until we have some momentum on a specific project.

Islesboro Housing Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, January 24, 2023
In-Person Meeting at 5:00 PM, Town Office

- Lauren asked if a wealthy family on the north end might want to become investors for the Durkee property. Michael Hutcherson stated that he thinks Alex Brigham might be willing to listen if we put together a solid pitch.
- Rick added that with projects of a larger scale (10 units or more), Maine Housing would be very helpful.
- Lauren suggested putting together some kind of project in which there are multiple sources of funding, including IESC, big-ticket donors, and housing organizations.
- Discussion about organizing a project and making a plan (who, where, how). Lauren suggested a meeting of this committee focused on a putting together a project plan outline.
- Discussion about having Will survey the Durkee's Store property to see if it's viable. Tom will talk with Richard.
- Discussion about other large properties on the island. Michael Hutcherson suggested talking with Jan Harmon and other large-property owners to see if they might be willing to sell some land for workforce housing.

8. Other Business

- None

9. Comments from visitors

- None

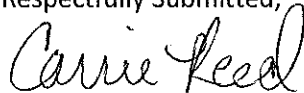
10. Set next meeting date

- Next meeting Tuesday, March 21, 5:00 PM

11. Adjourn

Motion by T. Tutor, seconded by R. Rogers, to adjourn at 6:04 PM. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carrie Reed, Secretary

