

Islesboro Housing Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, March 26, 2023
In-Person Meeting at 4:30 PM, Town Office

APPROVED

5/21/24

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chair Mike Nelson called the meeting to order at 4:37 PM.

2. Establishment of a Quorum

Quorum was established with over 4 members present

Members Present: Mike Nelson, Tom Tutor, Ginnie Hess, Cate Blackford, and Melissa Burns, Ex Officio.

Others Present via Zoom: Cressica Brazier, Barbara Talamo, Laura Staines Giardino.

3. Approval of minutes of January 23, 2024

Motion: To approve Minutes of January 23, 2024, as written, T. Tutor, seconded by C. Blackford. Motion passed, 4 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.

4. Up-Island Town Center Update.

- Tom Tutor reported that the Housing Committee has been in conversation with the Planning Board for many months. Tom is unclear on what the Planning Board is supposed to do. They have endorsed the idea of a third Town Center unanimously. The Planning Board has urged the Housing Committee to present to the Select Board.
- Tomorrow, Tom and Mike will present information to the Select Board.
- The Planning Board will then schedule informational meetings and a Public Hearing. After the Public Hearing, the Planning Board goes to the Select Board for approval to put it on the Warrant for the June 15th Town Meeting.
- The Planning Board has scheduled a Public Hearing for April 22nd. Not clear on whether or not it will include the Up-Island Town Center proposal. Mike has a note from Isabel Jackson from the Planning Board stating that if the Select Board endorses it, it would be bundled with LD 2003 for a Public Notice.
- The Planning Board will put a Public Notice in the Bangor Daily News. They also had an article in the Islesboro Island News (IIN). Tom has drafted an article for the IIN, but doesn't feel it's right to submit it before talking with the Select Board about it.
- Melissa suggests asking the Select Board for permission to push this to the Planning Board.
- Tom has emailed Jennifer West asking how much the Planning Board has informed the Select Board about the maps of the two existing Town Centers. Jennifer said she will be speaking to the Select Board also. Tom hopes to coordinate with Jennifer tomorrow night and get clear about the sequence of events. We will need to send out letters to property owners and abutters.
- If there are changes to be made after the Public Hearing, another Public Hearing will be required.
- Melissa reported that we might be having a Special Town Meeting on April 10th or 24th.
- Mike has a list of names and addresses of property owners in the proposed Town Center and abutters. It will need to be validated against the tax roll. Ginnie suggested utilizing the Commitment Book.
- Cate asked if there is anything needed in terms of putting together a packet of information to go along with the letters. Mike answered that the letter he has drafted has basic information and what it means.

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He included that the designation of a Town Center has no monetary impact on any property owners, unless they decide to take advantage of the new rules and change their property.

- Tom suggested it might be useful to refer to the Land Use Ordinance in the letter and at the Public Hearing.
- Melissa suggested we link the Ordinance and publish all the info on the website.

5. Housing Trust

- Mike stated that he did some research and found that everything indicates that housing trusts are a governmental thing.
- Melissa stated that her overview and thought process follows the example of IIT. If we had a designated pool (trust) for donated land, the Town would own the land, but the organization/trust could lease it (for 100 years or other terms) to someone who wants to build on it, with the guideline that it has to match and conform to affordable housing guidelines. In wondering if this was possible, Melissa's research led to the advice to talk to an attorney. We would need appropriate Ordinances.
- Mike found that this might conflict with what Islesboro Affordable Properties (IAP) does.
- Tom stated that IAP as a nonprofit has done a great job of providing some affordable housing stock. If a developer wants to develop affordable housing stock, the Town, or maybe this committee, could interface with them more appropriately than IAP.
- Barbara Talamo stated she's been thinking about mixed-unit housing, some affordable and some market- or near-market value. She wonders if that would restrict development, if you made it into a trust that was restricted to only HUD guidelines in income. Mike answered that a lot of that might depend on the source of funding. If it was government funding, it would come under the guidelines. Barbara stated you could put restrictive covenants on the units for affordable housing, and have mixed units together.
- Cate stated that there is an interesting model that's being used in Maryland and in Seattle where they have what Missa was just describing, in terms of some control or ownership held by the public, by the Public Housing Authority or by the Municipality, and they do mixed-income development and have alternative funding sources so they don't have some of those restrictions. There are some interesting ideas around different structures of community land trusts. Some own the land, and provide affordable units for rent and for home ownership, which is similar to some of what IAP does.
- Mike stated that the agency he worked for on the west coast would, as part of their development process, base approvals upon a designated percentage that was deemed affordable, and that provided limits on how much the units could be leased for, based on the covenants. If we have the money, developer, building codes, etc., the Town could determine what those percentages and restrictions would be.
- Tom stated that some of those issues are addressed in the amendments that the Planning Board is developing in response to LD 2003, that affordable housing has greater latitude for greater density inside designated growth areas, which are the Town Centers. Affordable housing developments would require at least 51% of the units qualify as affordable housing.
- Barbara asked if it would be possible to examine some of the property in the Up-Island area that's being considered to see if it's realistic to do this there. Tom stated that this step may be premature, but there are some properties that have been determined to be perc-able.

Islesboro Housing Committee
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- Melissa thinks that if we can get a developer, we can encourage development by helping with the cost of land, and maybe incentivize land donations for housing, with tax breaks, etc.
- Discussion about local taxes, business development, land trusts.
- Melissa stated that Alex alerted her to new legislation that may move forward regarding municipalities charging different tax rates for short-term rentals.
- Tom went over the proposed Planning Board developments: In Town Centers, the minimum lot size is reduced generally to 20,000 sf, slightly less than half an acre. If it's an affordable housing development, it is reduced significantly more, to 8,000 sf. An affordable housing development will have restrictive covenants. All this is being codified.

6. MCOG Housing Working Group

- Mike stated that the Midcoast Council of Governments (MCOG) received a grant to do some extensive housing studies. They came to one of our meetings and gave a presentation.
- They have set a time frame for the first meeting, sometime in the first two weeks of April. Mike has been in touch with Adi Philson, and has put his name in to attend the meeting.
- Tom stated the presentation had so much information that it was difficult to follow. Their website has more in-depth information that is easier to digest.
- Melissa asked if she should add MCOG to the website. Mike stated that MCOG and the Island Institute are both good sources of information.

7. Comments from visitors

- Cressica Brazier from the Energy Committee thanked the Housing Committee for their work.

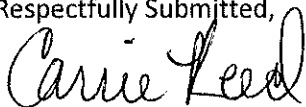
8. Next meeting date

- It would be helpful for Housing Committee members to attend the info meetings and the Planning Board Public Hearing.
- Discussion about points to include in the presentation to the Select Board tomorrow night.
- Discussion about informal surveys and housing needs on the island. MCOG has the best data.
- Next meeting Friday, April 26, 4:30 PM, depending on the outcome of the Public Hearing.

9. Adjourn

Motion by G. Hess, seconded by M. Burns, to adjourn at 5:34 PM. Motion passed, 4 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carrie Reed, Secretary

