

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
NORTHFIELD HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE
(FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE NORTHFIELD HOUSING TASK FORCE)
Meeting Minutes of May 12, 2023

- I. ROLL CALL.** Economic Development Director Tom Davis, Committee Members Erin Hicks-Tibbles, Lydia Petty, Blake Pierson, Tom Bright, Michael Krause, and Megan Roush. Also in attendance were member nominee Danielle Pelczarski and Mitch Osiecki (Northfield Zoning Administrator).

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

- II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Scheduled): None**

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting on April 28 were approved by unanimous vote.

IV. DISCUSSION:

a. Update on HTF membership

Mr. Davis reported that Tyler Renaud has decided to move from a voting member of the subcommittee to an advisory member.

The group was introduced to member candidate Danielle Pelczarski. Ms. Pelczarski is a Senior Vice-President and Chief of Staff for Norwich University. She has been with the University for one year, coming from California State Maritime Academy. She is part of Northfield community forum process and is on the executive committee and board member of the Central Vermont Economic Development Board. She is very interested in the community, especially from the Norwich perspective and wants to become a member as the outreach person from the Norwich community.

The group welcomed her as a valuable representative and voted unanimously to recommend to the Northfield Select Board that they appoint Ms. Pelczarski to the Housing Committee. The vote was 6-0-0.

b. Review of Proposed Bill S.100 and letter from HTF

Mr. Davis distributed a letter to the group that urged the legislature to support the Housing bill S.100 as originally written. The bill has gone to the Governor's desk with some advances that benefit housing efforts and is expected to be signed by Governor Scott.

Mr. Pierson discussed the concept of creating a Neighborhood Development Area (NDA), possibly on the land owned by the Foran Family, to increase benefits regarding housing development. The group was discussing whether or not it was worthwhile to apply for an NDA at the same time the town submits its application to become a designated downtown. Mr. Davis has reached out to Gary Holloway asking for a call for more clarification on the pros and cons of submitting both applications at once. In addition, this application is only possible with the Foran Family wishing to apply for such designation, which Mr. Davis will ask them.

Ms. Roush will also check on the latest updates on the designation process.

c. Review and comments on the proposed HTF Guiding Document

The group discussed that the name “task force” was a little confusing given that the group is a subcommittee of the Northfield Select Board.

The group unanimously voted to rename the Northfield Housing Task Force to the Northfield Housing Subcommittee. The vote was 6-0-0.

The group discussed “high-level” items regarding the subcommittee’s Guiding Document. Mr. Bright suggested that the document might benefit from more specific categorization of types of housing needed.

The group then discussed the importance of reporting to the Select Board and the frequency of those reports. Ms. Pelczarski and Mr. Kraus expressed their belief that regular reports (i.e., quarterly) to the Select Board is important both to keep them informed on the critical topic of housing and to provide feedback to the subcommittee.

Ms. Roush asked if it would be better for the group to generate some tangible goals before beginning the reporting to the Select Board. Mr. Pierson felt it was important to begin reporting sooner, even as goals and objectives are set.

The subcommittee settled on quarterly reporting.

Additional edits to the guiding document were managed by Ms. Roush, who will provide the revised document to the group. The subcommittee also agreed to call the guiding document the Northfield Housing Subcommittee Guiding Principles.

The group voted unanimously to accept the Guiding Principles as amended and send the amended draft to the Select Board for their review.

d. Other Matters

The subcommittee discussed agenda items for the next meeting. The items included electing officers, welcoming a CVRPC representative to inform us (if available), and continuing forward with the group’s focus and tasks. The next meeting will take place on Friday, May 26, 2023, at 2 pm.

V. ADJOURNMENT. The subcommittee adjourned at approximately 3:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas G. Davis

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Economic Development Director