

Town of Cape Elizabeth
Housing Diversity Study Committee

Meeting Minutes

February 27, 2023

Present: In-person: Kevin Justh (KJ), Stephanie Anderson (SA), Curtis Kelly (CK), Victoria Volent (VV), Katie Reeves (KR) **Virtually:** Timothy Thompson (TT)

Absent: Amit Oza (AO)

Committee Support Staff: Kristina Musante (KM) and Josh Biehler (JB) of K&J Strategic Solutions consulting firm

Public Guests: 7

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting began at 6:30 pm.

2. Attendance

Amit Oza was not present. Timothy Thompson was virtual. All other members were present in-person.

3. Public Comment

Cynthia Dill of 1227 Shore Road provided a map of 2020 Greenbelt Trails Map and proposal for Community Housing on Town-owned land while supporting the purpose of the Thomas Jordan Trust. Dill said trails around the property lead to public schools. Dill invited members of the public to join her at 9 am on March 18th, 2023 at Old Farm Trailhead to walk and view the land and its potential.

Nat Jordan of 6 Romaneer Road thanked the Town staff for implementing hybrid technology to allow members of the public to participate remotely. He was excited to be the first hybrid speaker. He commented on the survey RFP mentioning two points. The first point that the survey questions should be crafted with two options or choices because we know what they will say if allow for more open-ended answers. The second point was to speak to renters and commuters since they are point of the community as well.

4. Conversation with Town Manager, Matthew Sturgis

Matt Sturgis, Town Manager, invited Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner, to help present the questions that the committee had posed to Matt. They divided the questions, and both presented the answers posed by the committee to the Town's experts.

Maureen O'Meara presented first and responded to the questions posed. O'Meara encouraged the Committee to use MAPGEO and another town resource to identify properties where housing may be built. She explained many properties are deed restricted, and those deeds can be found on the Town's MAPGEO tool. She also presented the committee a list of 74 properties that categorized by type, address/section, and size. She also reported that LD 2003 Amendments go through the Town Council, Ordinance Committee, and Planning Board process. She reported a draft rule had been issued for LD 2003 and that local work is being done to meet the July 1, 2023, statewide deadline. O'Meara outlined some key provisions of LD 2003. O'Meara also reported comments from the Ordinance Committee such as, allowing for a second ADU on a property, 25% nonconforming lots – waive lot coverage, if a housing is set to be affordable waive the permit fees, minimize lot size for multifamily building, and recommended again the webinar on ADUs. She also provided additional information on local zoning, in-fill lots, and buildability analysis. Maureen also described that the Town was going to have a simple definition for multiplex and multifamily definition, although this is not required by LD 2003.

Matt Sturgis presented second and began with the History and Creation of the Thomas Jordan Trust. The Trust operates for the “benefit of the poor” of the Town. Today the trust is used to support the requests of low-income residents in need of smaller ticket items such dental works, automobile purchase, and other means of support upon request to Trustees. The Trust holds \$1.2 million assets currently. Currently, \$2,000 to \$10,000 is awarded annually.

Sturgis next discussed the written survey RFP the committee is developing and offered to support those efforts through his office. Sturgis then discussed resources and models that could be used to support affordable housing. He encouraged the committee members to use the expertise of the Town staff to support their efforts to identify land and strategies to create affordable housing. Matt mentioned his work with the Metro Coalition and that another good resource would be the Maine State Housing and if needed assistance to speak with them, he was happy to assist.

Sturgis encouraged the committee to submit budget requests to him immediately for the July 1st fiscal year start.

The committee members, O'Meara, and Sturgis then engaged in Q&A around tax abatements, ADU's, Jordan Trust, the Cynthia Dill proposal, and lot suitability factors. Committee members were encouraged to request feasibility studies on identified properties from the Town.

The committee expressed concern that, so few properties were available and viable candidates for building housing. Sturgis agreed that in-fill lots were probably among the best places to look. Committee and Town staff agreed zoning changes allowing for smaller lot size and higher density would be necessary to create diverse housing in Cape Elizabeth. Also, tax acquired parcels were in play for the committee to consider.

The public opinion survey was discussed and the need to understand people's preference and willing trade-offs. The Davis Farm was also discussed, and it was suggested that feasibility studies should be considered. Rentals were discussed on how to make those more affordable using section 8 and other gap funding strategies.

Affordable housing projects locally, Maine Planning Board, non-conforming lots, and ADU's were further discussed.

The presentation from Maureen O'Meara was requested.

5. Approval of Minutes from January Meeting (Monday, January 9, 2023)

Victoria Volent brought a motion to approve the minutes with the amended changes. Katie Reeves seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously 6-0.

6. Committee Staff Updates

a) Kristina Musante reported on the invitations to SME's status and that 2 developers, Liz Trice from Maine Cooperative Development Partners and Laura Reading from Developers Cooperative, would be presenting and engaging in Q&A at the next meeting, March 6, 2023. It was noted to allow for 45 minutes of combined presentation and Q&A for presenters. Musante was tasked to continue making invites and update the committee with progress.

b) Josh Biehler reported on Loomio project. Biehler mentioned that he invited Judy Colby-George to the April 3, 2023, meeting to present on Loomio. Judy Colby-George was the consultant used during the Comprehensive Plan when Loomio was last used by Cape Elizabeth. A discussion of who should be invited to participate in the survey and Loomio was discussed and concluded that it should include town staff, teachers, and other employees that work in Cape Elizabeth but do not live here.

7. Reports and Correspondence

The following reports and correspondence were reviewed and acknowledged has received and made note for the public record.

- a) Town Council Workshop January 18, 2023**
- b) Ordinance Committee Public Forum February 9, 2023**
- c) WGME News Articles on Cape Elizabeth on Affordable Housing**
- d) Suzanne McGinn Email on LD 2003 Ordinance Amendment**
- e) Maureen O'Meara Email with plan of Gull Crest**
- f) Jenna Isaacson Pfuller Email on LD 2003**

8. List Items on the Agenda

- a) Review of RFP for Public Opinion Survey**

The RFP was discussed, and changes requested by the committee to include increasing the budget to \$30,000 limit for service contract. A note of recommendations to be required. Also in summary or description to include the charge of the committee and the population of Cape Elizabeth. It was agreed that the RFP will go through the Town's Manager's office.

b) Discussion of other outreach and data collection efforts.

The support for using Loomio and written survey was discussed. This item was asked to be placed on future agendas to revisit.

9. Next Meeting /Event

- a) March 6, 2023, at 6:30 pm Town Chambers (Developer SME Q&A, budget request, and resources)
- b) March 20, 2023, at 6:30pm (lot size and permits)
- c) April 3, 2023, at 6:30pm Town Council Chambers & CETV (Loomio Q&A, Outreach, SMEs)
- d) April 20 at 6:30pm (Outreach, TBD)
- e) May 1 at 6:30pm Town Council Chambers & CETV (TBD)
- f) May 15 at 6:30pm (TBD)

As many as possible of these sessions will be held as hybrids. Susana Hubbs offered to support meetings whenever she could to allow technology to be supported.

9. Public Comment

Eamonn Dundon works as Director of Advocacy of the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce, former CE resident who would love to live in Cape Elizabeth but because of recent real estate market doesn't see it as feasible so lives in a duplex in South Portland. He encouraged the committee to look at their work from a systems levels opposed to looking at specific lots of land. This includes looking at zoning, land use, fees, and permits to encourage a broad range of housing. He pointed them to the Cumberland Housing Task Force Report, thinks it's a good comp town and the report includes ordinances they could change or policy to allow for a broad range of housing types. He mentioned LD 2003, knowing it is part of the Ordinance Committee, but wanted to mention that is a minimum but the towns around Cape Elizabeth and Portland should go beyond the minimum because of the location to jobs. He also asked the committee not speak over each other during the meetings so everyone can be heard clearly.

10. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned by chairmen and vice chairmen at 8:30 pm