

Town of Cape Elizabeth
Housing Diversity Study Committee
Finalized - Meeting Minutes
October 11, 2022

Present: Kevin Justh, Timothy Thompson, Stephanie Anderson, Curtis Kelly, Victoria Volent, Katie Reeves, Amit Oza

Absent: None

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

Public Guests: Yes. Speakers included: Scott Clark, John Voltz, Council Woman Nicole Boucher, and Maurine Clancy.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Meeting began at 7:00 pm. K&J took attendance of committee and welcomed members of the public.

2. Election of Chair

Kevin Justh, Timothy Thompson, Stephanie Anderson, and Victoria Volent were nominated to be chairperson. Kevin Justh received four votes and Timothy Thompson received three votes by secret written ballot. Kevin Justh was elected as chair and Timothy Thompson will serve as vice chair.

3. How will the committee handle public comment?

Committee members and members of the public discussed the importance of public comment and opportunities for the public to engage. Scott Clark expressed the need for the chairman to allow others on the committee to answer questions posed by the public. The chair agreed that members of the public would be permitted to address any member with questions. John Voltz echoed Scott Clark's concern and asked that the committee allow for some back and forth during public comment period. The committee expressed the need to collect as many questions as possible from the public and the committee should not be taken off track with too much back and forth. The chair expressed the desire for the committee to ask questions too. The committee expressed the importance of making the public feel comfortable to make comments.

The committee adopted rules of participation allowing for public comment at the beginning of committee meetings and at the end of committee meetings. The committee agreed the time constraints of 3 minutes per person may be extended if the topic needs more consideration.

4. Review of Maine's Freedom of Access Act (FOAA)

The committee support staff presented FOAA requirements for the committee. The committee support staff expressed the need to only discuss committee business at committee meetings. Committee members expressed the desire for future meetings and sessions to be recorded and/or livestreamed or held over zoom so more public could participate. Committee members and committee support staff were to follow up with Town staff and leaders to secure this type of technology.

5. Review of committee schedule and meeting location

Committee discussed setting a schedule for the year. The committee chair prosed the first Monday of the month at 6:30. Victoria Volent made a motion for this schedule and Stephanie Anderson second the motion and the committee passed the motion. The next meeting will be November 7, 2022.

6. Decision Making Structure

Committee agreed to making a decision by making of a motion and voting of the committee.

7. Committee Logistics

Committee discussed email correspondence coming from members of public and directed staff to include all articles and other items sent to the committee via email to be included in the following meeting agenda and submitted to the town website for public access.

The committee was asked to consider if a presentation AP government classes about the committee's work would be appropriate and allowable. After discussion the committee advised against any committee member presenting to government classes for fear of violating NOAA and appearing partial.

Committee members discussed next steps and the desire to collect and update data. Committee discussed with support staff their abilities to collect data and engage the public. The committee member staff conveyed that they are experts in qualitative data collection like community forums, focus groups, and individual interviews, as well as community engagement and organizing. However, designing and analyzing a written or electronic survey of a large group is outside their area of expertise. The committee support staff described how to use focus groups to create a stronger written survey and to better understand the issues and to prioritize strategies.

The committee discussed the value of the Camoin Housing Diversity for driving the work of the committee. The study outlines the issues and strategies for creating affordable housing in the town. The committee discussed implementing a mail survey to reach all people and to not depend only on online surveys. The last survey had a high return rate.

The committee discussed bringing in in experts from other areas that have successfully created affordable housing. The committee expressed the need for the community to understand the law, to be engaged and evaluate the options for creating affordable

housing. The committee discussed the need for public to understand housing like what AMI means, how to pay for housing like with a mill rate or bond. The committee asked that solutions remain Maine-centric. The committee discussed a need for a matrix of options and goals to guide the committee and the public and to track the Town Center project and other potential solutions and get rid of zoning that does not support housing diversity.

Committee members discussed and agreed to hosting a Community Forum the following month. The committee asked for the upstairs chambers to be reserved for the event if possible. This session will present some demographic and background data, LD 2003 law, and affordable housing strategies in Section 3 of the Camion Associate Housing Diversity Study for the Town of Cape Elizabeth, as well as discussion of production goals. The purpose of this session is to engage and educate the public about affordable housing laws and strategies. The committee members expressed a desire for this event to be live streamed or recorded and directed support staff to request this from the Town. Committee members directed support staff to place an ad in the newspaper and information in the Library newsletter, town email blast, and copies of the study to be made available at the library.

8. Public Comment

Scott Clark expressed the need for data and to go into detail when collecting data so it's useful. He also expressed frustration that these meetings and forums are not being recorded, posted, or live streamed. He asked that support staff approach the Town about zoom meetings and other forms of technology to increase visibility.

Council Woman Nicole Boucher suggested that data collection or survey questions give specific examples. She also suggested looking at other options not listed in the study like field lots, or requesting donation of land from land trust. Match LD 2003 with zoning ordinance that need to be changed and ask how do we get this done?

John Voltz stated that when you solicit general preferences there are a lot trades offs. He also expressed concern about census accuracy. He expressed the need for the community and committee to dissect the study and recommend to the council to do addition census data collection to rectify missing data and changing demographics.

Maurine Clancy requested for the committee to keep the public engaged in the process and the work of the committee.

9. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned by the committee chair.