**Comprehensive Planning Committee Minutes
November 17, 2021**

**Present**: Alanna Bachelder, Jeffrey Carlson, Paula Clark, Eric Dyer, Jessica Gorton, Joel Greenwood (KVCOG), Greg Leimbach, , Matt Nazar, Dennis Price, David Trunnell

**Absent:** Chris Cheney, Henry Clauson

Jessica called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. in person at the Town Office and via Zoom.

MINUTES

Without a quorum in October, the minutes for September could not be approved. However, they were not included in the packet for tonight, so that approval will be held over for the next meeting.

Matt moved the October minutes be approved; Dennis seconded. Joel noted one spelling correction, that CVCOG should be KVCOG. Minutes approved unanimously except for abstentions by those absent at the last meeting, including Paula, Greg, Dennis and David.

David asked about following up on action items, such as the potential for using an informal or nonqualified TIF for the upcoming Local Economy Chapter’s policies/goals, and whether Eric had found out anything more from the town of Monmouth on such a device. Eric said that Monmouth used a Farmland Trust TIF and that he would follow up with them and how that was done. David also asked about the mention of the Lions Club no longer being a going concern and whether those facilities will be available to the town. He also inquired about carrying over action items from one set of minutes to the next. A discussion ensued. It was ultimately determined that action items should be reported in both the minutes and the agendas, but the minutes are limited to recording what happened at a specific meeting and not for carrying over action items from previous minutes unless they are discussed at that meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

David introduced the chapter on Housing Opportunities. His presentation focused on the goals and policies of plans going back to 1988. He noted that overall efforts to improve the housing situation had failed and that many of the same problems remain. He noted that there are residents in town living without basic amenities, in overcrowded conditions, and with very limited incomes.

He listed three main points:

1. Town plans for accessible housing have grown increasingly detailed and even formulaic, yet no success has ever resulted.

2. A year 2000 Housing Conditions evaluation reported a number of housing problems, including about four homes that have incomplete plumbing, about six homes with no telephone, and about nine homes found to be overcrowded.

3. Next steps to Readfield finally succeeding in providing accessible housing must include:

* A new committee with professional expertise, including an attorney, a contractor, a finance person or CPA, and possibly an architect; and
* Use of action-oriented mission with the avoidance of passive words of the past such as “consider,” “strive for,” etc.

David suggested that this group of professionals be formed to really put a big push on housing opportunities.

Greg asked Joel about the availability of the 2020 Census data. Joel said that he doesn’t know for sure, but official estimates put the release, including housing data, at May or June 2022.

David asked about other options for information since the Census data is running so late. Eric said there is no real substitute for Census, but there are some other general sources such as the Kennebec Land Trust for other chapters in the plan. He said the best place to start is the 2010 data.

The committee discussed several options for useful statistics and concluded that Joel’s offer to provide 2010 census data is the best way forward.

Joel said Maine State Housing statistics can also tell us a bit about who lives in town, income levels, age, etc., and what housing might best suit those groups. He also notified the committee that KVCOG is currently working with several other member towns on accessible housing.

Paula suggested a comp plan implementation committee as a way to achieve certain pieces of the plan. She said that after the 2009 plan the Planning Board made changes to implement those goals and that there was an implementation committee that met for several years afterward.

Eric said he could look for implementation committee minutes and other products of those meetings and distribute them to the committee.

Paula said there is some overlap between land use and housing opportunities and some of these topics might fit into land use. She and Matt will complete their draft of land use updates and bring that to the committee.

Eric suggested that we might want to look at partnering with a nonprofit housing organization or set up a housing nonprofit for the town. Eric said that a housing authority, rather than a town committee would be the best approach for an accessible housing project. Dennis noted that it is easy to say the Selectboard should do something about housing but practically there is little they can do.

Greg asked about getting in an expert to advise the town on how we might proceed.

David suggested he circle back with Joel, Matt and Paula to nail down the land use issues relating to the Housing Chapter, and then work with Eric to consider how the town could proceed with a relationship with a housing authority to provide accessible housing.

Matt said based on 2020 Census data that has been released that there is not much change in the town’s population since the last census, as we went from 2,591 people to 2,597.

David asked about poverty in town and providing housing for those in need. Eric said low-income and substandard housing do exist in town; we are especially low in rental or transient housing. He said that in a survey for the broadband project, Readfield has less than six multi-unit buildings. We also lack appropriate housing for seniors. Eric said putting our efforts into continuing to adjust our policies in land use and regulations might be the best way to encourage more housing options.

The group explored reasons for why multi-unit housing might not be the only reason for why people choose a different town, especially the fact that Readfield’s location makes transportation a challenge for seniors and those who can’t drive (disabilities) or who can’t afford a vehicle.

Greg noted that big low-income projects often fail because they isolate those people from others, breaking people into groups rather than mingling those with higher aspirations. He said his studies of accessible housing recommended mixed income units be built in order to avoid segregation.

Paula asked if there is a need or a desire for apartment buildings and how we might approach a needs assessment.

OLD BUSINESS

Jeff revisited the Outdoor Recreation chapter, which has been updated on SharePoint.

Some issues discussed included the old Lions Club property, which is rather cluttered. Eric said that there is a possibility it might be turned into a licensed automobile junkyard.

Greg said he sees a big lack in the goals section and suggested some wording.

Jeff said there are still some data points he needs to explore. Greg offered to help. And Joel can provide some information as well.

There was discussion about goals and policies and how they are set up in the final document.

NEXT MEETING ACTION ITEMS

The next meeting will be December 15 at 6 p.m. Eric suggested discussing Public Facilities and Services and bring back Housing Opportunities.

Joel will provide 2010 census data for use by the committee.

Joel said he could provide some maps. Eric said he’d like to see those in the chapters online.

Eric said he’d send out the public folder info to the committee.

David will work with Joel on Maine State Housing data, with Matt and Paula to nail down their land use issues relating to the Housing Chapter, and then work with Eric to outline how the town’s accessible housing interests could be better served through a relationship with a housing authority in the lead.

David to provide a first draft of the new Housing Chapter.

Greg moved for adjournment; Dennis seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Minutes prepared and submitted by Holly Rahmlow