

Quick recap

The meeting covered various aspects of housing development and community planning, including updates on the Vermont Housing Improvement Program, discussions about accessory dwelling units, and potential land use for housing projects. The team explored funding options, zoning considerations, and strategies for promoting affordable housing initiatives in their area. They also addressed a leadership change within the group and discussed future plans for fundraising and community engagement.

Next steps

Mary to research and gather information on the Shadow Lake property from Dan at Vermont Land Trust.

Mary to investigate land records at the town office regarding the Greensboro Green property.
Kent to follow up with VLCT attorney on property tax holiday options and short-term rental tax regulations.

Jay to review existing ADU and PUD town bylaws and state programs to avoid possible conflicts.

Kent to forward PUD bylaw comments from regional planning group to Jay.

Jan to continue work on the mapping project, identifying areas in town that would be most suitable for additional housing

Housing Committee will discuss housing fundraising strategies for the various local housing initiatives at the next meeting.

Jay to discuss potential Committee co-chairmanship with Jan.

Summary

Meeting Agenda and AI Discussion

In the meeting, Sarah, Kent, Wendy, Naomi, Mike, Nancy, Jay, Mateo, Liz, Bill, Dede, and Mary discussed various topics. Kent expressed his goal to keep the meeting to 1 hour and asked if anyone had any questions or changes they wanted to make to the minutes from the last meeting. The only change to the minutes was a clarification made by Kent about what triggers an Act 250 review. With that change the previous minutes were approved. The team also discussed the use of AI for recording and editing meeting minutes.

VHIP Funding and ADU Reimbursement

Kent introduced Wendy Moran from Rural Edge, the home ownership director, clarified the Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP) with regard to ADU's. The program now offers a 10-year, 0% interest deferred forgivable loan option, which requires renting at HUD's Fair Market rent for the duration of the loan. The loan is set up more like a reimbursement program, with the owner needing to provide a 20% match before receiving grant funds. The funds are disbursed in three stages: 35% upon reaching 50% completion, 25% upon completion, and the final 15% upon providing an

executed lease showing the unit is rented at Fair Market rent. The meeting also discussed the possibility of promoting an upcoming session on ADUs by the Community Housing Forum.

ADU Rental Program and Compliance

Wendy discussed the specifics of the program for renting out ADUs, including the compliance period and the process of finding tenants. She also mentioned that the program can be used for new builds and up to five units on one piece of land. Jay raised concerns about the complexity of the process and the need for alignment with local zoning ordinances. Mateo asked about the funding requirements and the possibility of a homeowner doing the work themselves. Wendy clarified that the program was designed to be as easy as possible with minimal red tape. Kent and Jay discussed the state permit requirements and the lack of a certificate of occupancy in Greensboro. Wendy also mentioned that some towns in the Northeast Kingdom don't have building inspectors and the state isn't enforcing certain parameters.

Wastewater Funding and ADU Construction

Naomi, Liz, Bill, and WLM discussed the funding for wastewater enhancements and the construction of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). WLM clarified that the \$50,000 funding can be applied to any project that results in a net new unit, regardless of the number of bedrooms. However, the unit must be rented out, not occupied by the owner. The funding can also be used for renovations, but the amount depends on the number of bedrooms. WLM also mentioned that the State allows non-licensed contractors to do sweat equity at \$35 an hour, which can be counted as part of the match. The team also discussed the possibility of having up to 5 units on a property with a primary dwelling, but these units would not be considered ADUs. Finally, WLM mentioned that the town of St. Johnsbury City has provided additional grants for projects.

Community Housing Forum and Bend Development

Wendy agreed to contact the panelists for the Community Housing Forum and shared her email and phone number. Liz discussed the ongoing work for the forum and the need for more panelists.

Mapping Project

Jan provided an update on the Integrative Mapping Project, discussing the potential for development in the Bend area, including the possibility of using state-owned lands. Jay added that there's a significant amount of land in the Bend owned by the State, which could be utilized for development. Jan also mentioned the need to address water quality issues in the Bend. Kent ended the conversation by asking about the progress on the overall map of the town, to which Jan responded that they could have a map by mid-January.

Shadow Lake Property and Greensboro Green

Kent discussed the Shadow Lake property, which is owned by the Vermont Land Trust and apparently has a designated housing area. Mary was tasked with gathering more details about the property's potential. Mateo clarified that the land is designated for affordable housing and is part of a bundle of parcels managed by Dan. However, no specific plans or proposals have been developed yet. Mary was also asked to follow up with Dan for more information. There

was also a discussion about the Greensboro Green property, which was gifted with deed restrictions but lacks a conservation easement. The group agreed to research the covenants and check the land records for more information.

Land Swap, Wastewater, and Housing Update

Kent assigned Mary to investigate the concept of land swap, which Naomi had raised questions about. Mateo clarified that the Vermont Land Trust had no appetite for such a swap due to legal complications and settled case law. Kent then discussed the wastewater update, where the Select Board had decided to allocate additional filtration volume to the town, despite no agreement with the Perron's to date. VLC&T suggested that a housing authority could be created to focus on specific areas, such as housing.

Short-Term Rentals, Taxes, and PUDs

In the meeting, Kent, Mateo, Naomi, and Jay discussed the challenges and potential solutions related to short-term rentals and property taxes in their community. Kent gave a local taxing incentive disincentive update, which the Vermont League of Cities and Towns stated was prohibited by state law. The group considered the possibility of a property tax holiday and the need for further research on this topic. They also discussed the need for education and promotion of Planned Unit Developments (PUD's). Jay offering to review the current zoning bylaws concerning ADU's and PUD's. The team also discussed the upcoming community conversation on the Community Survey 1/15/25 and a separate community conversation on town zoning later next Spring, Fundraising Alternatives

Mateo emphasized the need for fundraising and suggested exploring federal funds. Naomi proposed a strategic approach to fundraising, considering the various housing projects in the area. Kent agreed, suggesting the possibility of a bond issue to fund housing projects. The team agreed to research this alternative approach and to discuss it further at their next meeting.

Exploring A New Chairmanship

In the meeting, Kent expressed his need to step down as chairman due to his busy schedule with the Habitat for Humanity activity and his Chairmanship of the Planning Commission. He suggested a shared chairmanship and encouraged others to consider taking on the role. Jay proposed Jan as a potential candidate, highlighting his energy and willingness to think outside the box. Kent suggested to Jay the possibility of a co-chairmanship role along with Jan.

Next Committee Meeting will be held mid-January.