



Housing Committee

Town of Chilmark

MEETING NOTES - FINAL November 16, 2023 (via ZOOM)

Present for the Housing Committee and attending the Zoom meeting were Jim Feiner – Chair, Ann Wallace, Allison Cameron Parry (joined at 9:20 AM & left at 9:47 AM), Peter Cook, Bill Rossi and Alison Kisselgof - Administrator. Also in attendance were Adam Petkus, Richard Andre, Luke Lefebber, Laura Silber, Jeffrey Dubard and Billy Meegan (joined at 9:55 AM).

Nettie Kent Ruel was not in attendance.

The meeting started at 9:02 AM.

VINEYARD POWER ENERGY TRANSITION & OTHER PROGRAMS: Richard Andre and Luke Lefebber from Vineyard Power joined the Committee to discuss some energy programs for income eligible residents.

Luke said that there were two aspects of the Vineyard Power program that they were promoting: their renewable energy non-profit (501c3) focused on enabling the island to 100% renewable energy and increasing home energy efficiency in conjunction with Cape Light Compact (CLC) and MassSave, including rebates, energy subsidies and other programs to lower energy costs.

Luke mentioned that Vineyard Power is approaching all towns to support outreach. Laura Silber from MV Commission had suggested that Vineyard Power reach out to this Committee to get information about these programs to income eligible Chilmark residents, including tenants of deed restricted units, Homesite owners and accessory apartment renters.

Richard offered that there is also the Cape & Vineyard Electrification Offering (CVEO), which is a pilot program by CLC. The program offers qualifying residents incentives for energy efficiency, solar & battery storage.

Jim asked how the Committee could support the programs. Richard answered that Vineyard Power plans several approaches including mail & email marketing, information at town hall and public information sessions. Bill asked for information on income requirements and if programs were available to renters. Luke said that the programs would be for 60-80% AMI and that renters would be eligible. Richard mentioned there were also programs for renters without income restrictions. Jim offered that some of his tenants have received CLC benefits. Luke shared on screen CLC's chart with information on the programs discussed. Ann mentioned that Dukes County Regional Housing Authority could potentially assist by sending information to Rental Assistance Program participants. Luke said that there were plans to meet with DCRHA.

Laura offered that a mailing from the town would probably get more attention than one from Vineyard Power. She said that West Tisbury sent information with the tax bills. Other suggestions were to distribute information to landlords to provide to tenants and to put information on the Town's website. There was a brief conversation about how information could be distributed at town meeting. Richard mentioned that Vineyard Power was already working with the Tax Collector to include information with the tax bills.

Jim asked that the Committee be sent materials. Peter said it would be useful to have a prospectus and start an FAQ.

REVIEW OF PROVINCETOWN'S CORPORATE-OWNED SHORT TERM RENTAL WARRANT:

Laura said that Provincetown passed a short term rental (STR) bylaw recently and the language was very comprehensive, which prohibits operation of STRs by corporate entities. A similar bylaw was already approved by the AG for Great Barrington. Laura mentioned that she had sent the language to the Select Board and Planning Board at their request.

Bill asked Peter if the Planning Board was currently working on a STR bylaw. Peter confirmed a bylaw is in progress. Peter felt that there was some urgency to getting a bylaw written and thought that the Provincetown bylaw could help get Chilmark's bylaw done sooner. Ann offered that a draft bylaw had been sent to town counsel. Tisbury has already drafted a bylaw which is currently being reviewed by the AG and a response is expected at the end of the month.

A motion was made to send a memo to the Planning Board to request a STR bylaw be drafted as quickly as possible. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

MV COMMISSION HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT UPDATE: Laura said that the last Housing Needs Assessment has been used as a basis for all state level asks to date but that the study is out of date. The consultant that conducted the original study is available to update it in December. The cost to hire the consultant would be \$2,000 per town. Laura mentioned that the study was previously conducted every five years but that the MV Commission would like to change the frequency to every other year. Laura asked if the Committee could request funds from the Molly Flender Affordable Housing Trust (MFAHT) to cover Chilmark's portion of the updated assessment fee.

A motion was made to send a request for \$2000 for an updated housing needs assessment to the MFAHT Committee. The motion was seconded and passed by unanimous approval.

PLACEMATE LEASE TO LOCALS PROGRAM: Laura said that the Placemates Lease to Locals program originated in California and had been very effective at incentivizing owners to convert STRs to long term rentals. Nantucket has started a pilot program using a private donation as funding, although usually the program would be set up between the company and the town. Placemates has been extremely successful with conversion of hundreds of STRs into long term units. Laura mentioned that the advantage was the Town would not need to build any new housing. She said that Edgartown and Falmouth plan to get a town-specific presentation from Placemates and thought that the program might be a good fit for Chilmark as well.

Ann asked if seasonal rentals would be included in the program. Laura answered that it would depend on the town but that the program has been used for both seasonal and year round units.

Jeffrey offered that he had attended some of the Nantucket Placemates meeting. He mentioned that the incentive would be paying the landlords the difference between STR and long term rental. Jeffrey thought that this incentive program might be difficult for residents to accept. He asked if there was any discussion about tax breaks as incentive instead. Laura said that the Governor has proposed offering tax breaks but no legislation has passed yet and it may be a while before tax breaks could be instituted. Laura mentioned that towns with two-tiered tax structures could offer residential exemption rates. Jeffrey wondered if non-profits could be involved in facilitating rentals since nonprofits may be able to give tax donations in exchange for donated rent.

Peter offered that he would like to see details about the Nantucket program. Laura suggested that the Committee reach out to Kai Frolich at Placemates and also to Julia Lindner at the Nantucket private donor group ACK*Now. She also mentioned that the extra funds from excise increase would not be constrained by AMI restrictions like CPA funds and could be used towards a lease to locals program in Town. Laura offered that a pilot program could probably be run for \$100,000-150,000 and may be more acceptable to Town residents. Jim suggested that Placemates be contacted to present to the Committee.

FRACTIONAL OWNERSHIP DRAFT BYLAW – PLANNING BOARD UPDATE: Ann said that there was little to report on this topic. The Planning Board has sent a bylaw draft to town counsel and is awaiting response.

ADU BY RIGHT DISCUSSION: Alison said that she added this topic to the agenda to discuss the ramifications of the Governor's proposed legislation that would make accessory dwelling units (ADUs) by right. Since Chilmark currently allows accessory apartments by special permit, the proposed legislation would require changes to the Town's current zoning.

Laura offered that the legislation is modeled after a very successful law in California. She said that the earliest that Massachusetts legislation could pass is end of July but that the bill was huge and would take a while to work through. If passed in July, the law would be expected to go into effect in January the following year with approximately a yearlong transition period.

Bill wondered if any of the Town's restrictions would still be apply should the ADU by right legislation pass. Laura offered that there would be some reasonable restrictions still allowed at the local level.

Peter mentioned that the Master Plan subcommittee is working with Building Inspector Adam Petkus to review zoning bylaws. Adam said that his understanding is that local bylaws could be more restrictive than state but he would like to consult with legal. Laura offered that the California legislation took away town rights to be more restrictive and suggested that the Committee review the language of their law.

EXCISE WARRANT ARTICLE LANGUAGE DISCUSSION: Ann asked who would be writing the excise warrant. Bill said that the Select Board would like to receive a written article from this Committee for the annual town meeting. Laura offered to help the Committee with the drafting of the excise warrant. She suggested to email Edgartown and Aquinnah to get a draft of their warrant to review.

Bill said that he would like the language of the warrant article to reflect the amount allocated to the MFAHT could be changed. He also said that it would be instrumental that the Peaked Hill Pastures (PHP) project has access to the funds and also funds should be available to pay existing bonds.

Jim offered that annual or biannual review was previously mentioned. Laura said that paired warrants might be best with one to increase the excise and other to discuss where funds go on an annual basis.

PEAKED HILL PASTURES RFP COMMITTEE UPDATE: Peter said that the PHP RFP Committee had heard from Judi Barrett, who apologized for the delay and said that she would have an RFP version to share soon. Peter offered that the PHP RFP Committee would work to get the RFP ready quickly once a draft had been received from Judi.

APPROVAL OF DRAFT MINUTES: Draft minutes were not prepared in time for this meeting and will be approved at the next meeting.

TOPICS NOT ANTICIPATED: None

DOCUMENTS:

Cape Light Compact Income Eligible Programs Summary

NEXT POSSIBLE MEETING: December 21, 2023 @ 9:00 AM

With no further business to conduct the meeting adjourned at 10:08 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Alison Kisselgof, Board Administrator.