

**Town of St. Johnsbury**  
*Planning Commission*  
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

**DRAFT Minutes**

August 18, 2015

PC Members in Attendance: Susan Cherry, Maurine Hennings, Jim Brown, Ed Behr. Guest presenters on housing: Sean Brown and Kelly Greaves of Economic Services. Absent: Willie Nickerson and Ben Copens.

7:10 – Susan opened the meeting after a quorum arrived.

A welcome was directed to new Planning Commission member Ed Behr. No minutes were available for July, and a quorum from the June meeting was not present to approve the June minutes. Both sets of minutes were tabled to the Sept. meeting.

Sean Brown, Deputy Commissioner of DCF Economic Services and Kelly Greaves from the St. Johnsbury office presented information about housing.

- DCF is moving from state funded crisis housing to community funded due to statutory housing solutions passed by VT legislature during last session.
- Last year, \$272,000 was spent on hotel vouchers in St. Johnsbury
  - 37 families
  - 50 Adults
  - 62 Children
  - 129 Single adults
- 3 Types of housing provided by Economic Services Division of DCF:
  - Catastrophic re-housing (fire, flood, DV situation or constructively evicted by landlord)  
This can be year-round and up to 84 days for emergencies
  - Vulnerable housing – ie: elderly, SSDI, last trimester of pregnancy or child under 6. 28 days of emergency housing is available
  - Anyone during cold weather exemption: below 20 degrees, below 32 with 50% chance of precipitation
- 4.2 million was spent statewide last year out of general fund dollars
- Housing First – new model – presenting at next Continuum of Care meeting in St. J.
- Criteria for success should include:
  - Transportation
  - Good location (walkable to food, services – or on transportation route)
  - In population centers where people can receive services, health providers, groceries, case management.
- Health care costs are higher for homeless
- Choices for Care program – helps people stay in home rather than hospital or expensive residential situations
- All towns will be required to have an operational plan by Jan. 2017. Hotel voucher system will still be in place this winter. Should have plan before next winter. Work with Police Department, Continuum of Care and all AHS local agencies in forming this plan.

A public hearing was held on August 12, 2015 with 14 community members in attendance. After reviewing public comment, the following actions were taken:

1. Motion by Ed, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jim, approved to recommend for SB Public Hearing: Define Transitional Residence: A residential facility operated by a government agency or private non-profit organization that provides living accommodations to people who previously resided in a prison, a psychiatric care facility or an addiction treatment facility.
2. Motion by Jim, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Maurine, approved to recommend for SB Public Hearing: Define Temporary Overnight Shelter: A place where people experiencing homelessness stay overnight

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for a limited period of time. Descriptions of Temporary Overnight Shelters include, but are not restricted to:

- a. Shelters that operate on a first-come, first-served basis where people must leave in the morning and have no guarantee of a bed for the next night; or
  - b. Shelters where people know that they have a bed for a specified period of time as defined by the managing organization (even if they leave the building every day); or
  - c. Shelters that provide temporary shelter due to weather conditions.
  - d. This category does not include shelters that operate only in the event of a natural disaster to accommodate large numbers of displaced residents.
3. Motion by Jim, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ed to: Create a criteria section to be added to the Bylaws with guidelines for the DRB to insure the success of a shelter. An initial straw vote would put Transitional Residence in zones RL-2, R-T, R-A, R-B, MU, Com. and HS with the clear criteria. Further revisions to zones for Temporary Overnight Shelter were tabled pending the criteria discussion.
4. Motion by Jim, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ed to move the definitions for Residential Care Home to the SB for their Public Hearing.
- a. Residential Care Home: A place, however named, excluding a licensed foster care home, which provides for profit or otherwise, room, board, and personal care to three or more residents unrelated to the licensee. These include level 8, II, III, and IV facilities as licensed by the State of Vermont.
    - i. Nursing Home: A level I or II Residential Care Home.
    - ii. Level III Community Care Home: A residential Care Home licensed and required to provide room, board, personal care, general supervision, medication management, and nursing overview.
    - iii. Level IV Community Care Home: A Residential Care Home licensed and required to provide room, board, personal care, general supervision, and medication management.
5. Motion by Jim, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Maurine, and approved to move the addition of “office” to R-T as a recommendation to the SB for their Public Hearing
6. Motion by Jim, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ed and approved to remove Section 421, 503.2 sub-section g as a recommendation to the SB for their public hearing. The mixed use housing language is found to be problematic in regulatory language and may prevent grant funding.

Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager reported that town construction should be finished by Sept. 7. DuBois and King are providing a scoping study and will hold a public meeting to present and discuss alternatives to a dangerous bike/ped intersection at South Main and Route 5.

Maurine Hennings submitted a letter of resignation to the planning commission. It was accepted with regret.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Cherry,  
Planning Commission Chair