

## **Plainfield Housing Advisory Committee (PHAC)**

### **Purpose statement ::**

**To develop financially feasible pathways to more housing opportunities in the Town of Plainfield,** with the following goals and guiding principles::

- To increase the availability of safe & affordable housing, to support a more diverse, vibrant, intergenerational, vital and inclusive community;
- To restore and grow the tax base;
- To maximize outside funding, in order to minimize costs to the Town;
- To expand the Water and Wastewater user base, with attention to real limits;
- To be attentive to the quality of life of the Town of Plainfield, while honoring its historic character.
- Focus on smart growth, (and minimize sprawl).

### **Role ::**

- The PHAC is an advisory body to the Plainfield Select Board.
- The PHAC will coordinate with other Town Committees and Town Departments directly, as needed, (e.g. W/WW, Roads, Planning, Rec and Public Arts, Historical Society, Conservation Commission, Emergency Management, etc.)
- From within its membership, the PHAC will appoint one or more liaisons to report to the Selectboard.

**Scope of Work ::** The PHAC will...

- Explore feasibility of sound, affordable housing creation and clarify healthy goals;
- Conduct a [Housing Needs Assessment](#)
- Explore and follow the many generated ideas for new or renewed housing, brainstormed by the Town;
  - Include a diversity of housing options (e.g. mix of single-family homes, multi-plexes, tiny houses, apartments, etc.) and ownership structures (e.g. rentals, owner occupied, alternate ownership structures, such as co-ops);
- Foster community engagement, by soliciting prospective project feedback from both community members and relevant experts;
- Prioritize infrastructure that can be brought online as soon as possible, so the number of housed people grows;
- Provide educational opportunities to the public around housing landscape and strategy;
- Provide guidance to the Selectboard toward additional, affordable housing, amidst Vermont's housing crisis - and make process recommendations to the Selectboard to assist in decision-making;
- Coordinate and share information gathered by Working Groups (more on these below);
- Coordinate & collaborate with the Grants administration team;

- Regularly share public progress reports, including articulation of compromises made to remediate any perceived harms caused by any of the proposed projects.
- ^^ ~~~~~ *above represents highest priority* ~~~~~ ^^
- Support the Selectboard in developing responsible & pro-active housing ordinances;
- Determine approximate project timelines, according to logistical, ecological, and financial realities;
- Recommend contracts & expenditures to the Selectboard, such as testing, engineering, construction, and municipal project management;
- Research and recommend fundraising strategies to the Selectboard to assist in the development of affordable housing options;
- Develop schematic development plans for whatever ideas are found to be sound;

**Term of Committee (Indefinite), and Time Commitment ::**

While the Select Board reserves the right to dissolve the PHAC at any time, it is anticipated that the PHAC will continue indefinitely, until/unless it becomes clear that the work of the committee is no longer necessary.

Individual terms are from 1 to 3 years, to be appointed by the Selectboard. Committee roles (distinct from working group participation) represent a significant commitment of time & energy.

**Membership / Composition / Co-Chairs::**

The PHAC shall consist of (as many as) 9 people, appointed by the Selectboard, *for 1-3 year terms*. The Selectboard may remove members for cause, and will act to fill any vacancies as quickly as possible.

3 of 9 will be co-chairs, who all practice at :: respect for all views; deep listening; honesty; with a long-view focus. Chairs :: facilitate meetings (or delegate the task), call votes, and are the official heads of the committee.

A majority is needed to pass motions.

Membership may include non-residents of Plainfield.

**Working groups**

Both within the committee, and working around it, are coordinated working groups, bringing sub-projects through to completion, that are created and overseen by PHAC. Working groups are composed of either/both committee members, and satellite teams of people invested in the project. There is no limit to the number of people who may work with the committee in this way, so long as the committee (PHAC) itself consents to the additions. With attention to their role identifying and prioritizing infrastructure that can be brought online as soon as possible, unique working groups *might include, but are by no means limited to ::*

- Communications
- Demographic mapping & needs assessment

- Inventory of current under-utilized housing stock
- Derelict Housing Transformation/Incentivization ~ Collaboration on ordinance with Selectboard
- Zoning Policy recommendations
- Accessory Dwelling Unit incentivization
- House moving
- Financing - Budgets, loans, grants
- Vacant lot identification/Exploration of potential new development sites
- Helping people figure out how to build / move houses affordably
- Collaboration & consultation with the owner & operators of The Creative Campus at Goddard
- Creation of new lots/Subdivision encouragement
- Creation of cooperative housing trust
- Unit additions (adding Kitchens & Baths to existing housing stock)

**Public Process ::**

The PHAC shall publicly post its times and places of meetings in the Town, which shall be open to the public in accordance with the terms of the Open Meeting Law set forth in 1 V.S.A. chapter 5, subchapter 2. Final decisions and formal recommendations will be made by majority vote, following the relaxed version of Roberts Rules of Order, as followed by the Selectboard.

**Agreements for Housing Committee membership ::**

By joining the Committee, members agree to practice ::

- Open-mindedness
- Deep listening
- Bringing best selves forward

In the journey of welcoming neighbors Home, in a timely way.

**Expectations of Committee members ::**

- Attending the meetings.
- Adhering to the agreements.
- Doing the work that is established by the committee as priority.
- Sharing out the work & progress publicly.
- Self-assess regularity of meetings. Consider bi-weekly meetings to start. Meet regularly.

Those regularly absent will be asked to leave. Chairs and members may be asked to step down by the Board or the Committee, if they are not meeting the responsibilities of their positions.

**Selectboard Liaison:**

The Selectboard may appoint a liaison to the PHAC and/or, request that a liaison from PHAC be designated to interact directly with the Board. Until or unless chosen, the co-chairs will serve as liaisons.

**First Meetings ::**

The Selectboard will set the agenda for the first meeting or two, recommend a no-later-than starting date, and support the election of the co-chairs.

**Open Meeting Laws Training ::**

We hope that folks on this committee will consider attending this training in proper committee process (A.K.A. Open Meeting Laws, as required by the state) through the Vermont League of Cities & Towns ::

<https://sos.vermont.gov/municipal-division/open-meetings/>