

St Johnsbury Housing Committee

Minutes from meeting on Friday November 12, 2021

Present via Zoom: Susan Cherry, Joe Kasprzak, Patricia Jansson, Alice Kitchel, Irene Nagle, Pam Dearborn

- We discussed our name and Susan let us know that we can continue to be called a “Committee” and that Joe has separated us on the website into a “Non-governmental” group of committees
- Recruiting Suggestions:
 - Front Porch Forum is always a good tool
 - An ad in the Caledonian?
 - Maybe not as effective these days?
 - Some disagreed saying that more people are using the on-line edition
 - We could use the NFP column as it is free
 - We should include our mission statement and a small statement of what we do
 - Susan will post something on Front Porch Forum and in the NFP column in the paper
 - A personal invitation is always the best way to recruit
 - Daryl Rudy wants to join and was invited
- Select Board
 - Susan was wondering if we needed to update the Select Board on our new structure
 - Joe felt like we didn’t really need to – they are aware of the status of RHIGP and that we should wait until we have a new project to present
 - Joe did suggest that maybe we should take the opportunity to make sure we are represented on the committee that is deciding what to do with the American Rescue Plan Act funding that we received
 - We do have members of this committee that are also on that committee but they are not necessarily representing us!
 - No one offered at this time to represent this committee on the ARPA
- Code Compliance
 - The Fire Department is no longer doing the code compliance inspections
 - The town has hired Kresten Sterling as of November 1st to do the inspections
 - He will report directly to the Town Manager
 - Currently they have a heavy load of complaints that they are following up on and have not been doing the routine inspections
 - 94% of the rental housing is currently registered for this year – 96% compliance is expected
- Continuum of Care thru Community Connections
 - No one is currently taking advantage of the Hoarding class that is being offered
 - Wondering how to make it more accessible
 - Discussion that this is a difficult group to engage as they tend not to see it as a problem and there are usually mental health issues in play

- They have invited NEKHS to be a part of this support
- Rental Housing Improvement Grant Program
 - There were 5 inquiries but only 3 applications
 - The RHIGP will meet this Wednesday 11/17/21 to review the applications
 - A suggestion was made to have handouts explaining the program for the Code inspector to give out!
- Patrick Shattuck, Irene N. and Joe K. did a presentation at the NEK Connects program today on housing in St Johnsbury that was very good!
- Warming Shelter update by Susan
 - This committee is meeting weekly and is made up of a number of local stakeholders
 - They have a possible site in mind but unlikely to be ready in time for this winter
 - It is helpful that the Motel Voucher program has been extended
 - It is actually easier for agencies to support those in need when they are grouped together at the motels
 - The goal of a shelter is always a short term step to permanent housing