

## Housing Committee Meeting: August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 12:30pm

Attendees: Joe K., Alicia, Al, Ron, Alice, PJ, Susan, Patrick, Irene, Scott Campbell

Guests: Evan Oleson, Northern Forest Center

***Mission and Objectives-*** *“To support economic growth by improving the over-all quality of residential and commercial properties in St. Johnsbury”.*

### **RHIGP- Projects Update & Round II Plans (PJ):**

PJ provided an update for the second round of the Rental Housing Improvement Grant Program. There is approximately \$18,000 left for the 2021 program. The Review Committee is working through organizational details and definitions.

The plan is to announce the program by September 1, 2021, accept applications through September 30, 2021, and announce grant awards by November 15, 2021.

### **St. Johnsbury Energy Committee:**

Scott Campbell represented the Energy Committee and mentioned the likely synergies between the Energy Committee and the Housing Committee. The Energy Committee supports the RHIGP and hopes the program will look to include energy efficiency in its eligible project list. Housing Committee members agreed that energy efficiency is a priority and expressed an interest in seeing the RHIGP expand to include energy efficiency initiatives.

### **Committee Organizational Discussion:**

There was discussion on whether or not the Housing Committee had the authority to change the RHIGP to include energy efficiency projects as eligible projects for funding. The group discussed the Housing Committee and the Rental Housing Improvement Grant Program Review Committee’s organizational structure. The Review Committee is advisory in nature and is appointed by the Select Board. The Housing Committee is a community-based group that came out of the VCRD Community Visit process and had no formal structure or authority. Much discussion followed, and the group agreed to add *organizational structure* to the next Housing Committee meeting agenda.

Joe agreed to review the formation of the Review Committee by the Select Board to identify its role in the RHIGP program.

Joe also agreed to update the Town website to clarify that the Housing Committee was a community-based group and not a Town appointed committee.

### **Northern Forest Center:**

Evan Oleson presented information about the Northern Forest Center and its recent interest in workforce housing, including two housing projects, one in Millinocket, Maine, and the other, in Lancaster New Hampshire. Evan mentioned NFC’s background and experience and discussed the creation of a Northern Forest Fund that could fund efforts that ensure rural community sustainability. Evan hopes to schedule one-on-one discussions with stakeholders to get feedback on how the NFC can support the NEK. The group was excited to hear that the NFC was interested in working with NEK communities and pledged support and participation.

The meeting adjourned at 1:50 pm.

The September Housing Committee is scheduled for September 09, 2021, t 12:30pm.

Minutes submitted by JK.