

Draft Hartford Committee on Housing and Homelessness December 21, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Members Present: John Haffner (Chair), Jennifer Kravitz (Vice-Chair), Nancy Trottier, Maggie Burnett, and Dan Nott
Lori Hirshfield (staff)

Member Absent: Ally Tufenkjian (Selectboard Liaison)

1. Call Meeting to Order

John Haffner called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. He then read the script regarding the meeting being a hybrid format with in-person and remote access.

2. Introductions with New Member Maggie Burnett

The members introduced themselves to new member Maggie Burnett. Maggie shared that her interest in being on the Committee comes from her perspective everyone deserves a roof over their head. She is looking for creative ways to address housing needs within the Town. She has a background in working with nonprofit agencies.

3. HCHH Member to do Meeting Minutes

Lori Hirshfield offered to do the Minutes for this meeting.

4. Review Order of Agenda

There were no changes to the order of items on the meeting agenda.

5. Approve November 23, 2023 Committee Meeting Minutes

There were no changes to the Minutes. Jennifer Kravitz made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented and Nancy Trottier seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

6. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

7. Approve 2024 Committee Meeting Schedule

Jennifer Kravitz made a motion to approve the FY2024 meeting schedule as presented. Nancy Trottier second the motion which was approved unanimously by the Committee.

8. Joint meeting with Norwich Housing Committee

John Haffner and Lori Hirshfield noted they have had conversations with the Norwich Housing Committee regarding a joint meeting in January or February to share what each is doing and explore opportunities to collaborate. The HCHH members discussed possible agenda topics and preferred a January meeting. Lori will connect with one of the Norwich Committee members on a possible date and work with John on an agenda.

9. Town Plan Housing Chapter Update

Lori Hirshfield reported that staff are reviewing comments from the community meetings for changes to the draft plan presented. There may be a need for an additional Steering Committee meeting before initiating the formal public hearings and adoption process. She noted the current review of Hartford's Zoning Regulations to identify possible changes to increase opportunities for housing and incorporating the new state requirements under Act 47. She also noted the overlap with these bylaw changes and recommendations with the Housing Chapter update. There was some discussion about the new Act 47 provisions and how these limited the Planning Commission's review authority for the recent low barrier shelter application. John Haffner asked the Committee to consider for future discussion how the Commission might help facilitate greater community discussions about how Hartford and adjoining towns can house the unhoused beyond the current Haven application. John also noted that people have shared their appreciation of the HCHH's specific language about homelessness in the Housing Chapter update.

10. Discussion on Housing Development Program

Lori Hirshfield shared that the Selectboard decided not to fund the proposed Housing Development at this time given the need to use the funding for other ready to go projects in Town. She noted that the program is focused on small grants and/or loans to property owners interested in creating ADU's or conversion of residential spaces into smaller scale multi-dwelling unit buildings. She added that the Selectboard is recommending funding for the new Housing and Development Specialist position beginning July 1, 2024 which would be instrumental in fully developing how this pilot project could work for consideration by the SB in FY2026. Lori also discussed with the Committee that it still can work on flushing out and begin implementation of the Housing program information and technical assistance component this fiscal year. Lori also noted that the Hartford Business Revolving Loan Fund (HBRLF) Committee members have been discussing the use of this HBRLF and the VCDP 2020 RLF for ADUs and small-scale multifamily developments and want to discuss with the HCHH. They are having a January 31st special meeting on this topic; some HCHH members are interested in attending.

11. News from Committee Members

Dan Nott suggested for future Committee discussion having a landing page on the Town Website for current housing issues and information such as resources for finding out about ADUs, available housing to rent, homesharing, current events around housing. HCHH members decided to have this as a regular agenda item at future meetings to do the planning and rollout. Lori noted that there is a "Homes for Hartford" page on the

Hartford Website with a logo that was initiated during the Housing Chapter update with the intention to be used beyond the Plan update. She added that her administrative assistant replacement can help make the webpage information more visible.

John Haffner shared that Simon Denis has an interest in making changes to town regulations to allow RVs as a temporary sleeping place option for unhoused persons. Simon had spoken to the Planning Commission about this in the past. John suggested having Simon come to a future HCHH to talk about this proposal.

Topics for Future Meetings - Based on the meeting discussions, the Committee identified the following topics:

January Meeting

- New Windsor County Pilot Homesharing Program
- Joint meeting with Norwich Housing Committee
- HSHH Communications

Possibly Feb Meeting

- Simon Dennis
- Housing Development Program

12. **Adjourn Meeting:**

Jennifer Kravitz made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Nancy Trottier seconded it. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting ended at 9:16 PM.

Committee Members as of 11-16-2023

John Haffner, Chair (through 12/12/2024)

Jennifer Kravitz, Vice Chair (through 4/03/2025)

Dan Nott (through 11/28/2024)

Nancy Trottier (through 9/18/2025)

Maggie Burnett (through 12/11/25)

Ally Tufenkjian, Selectboard Liaison

Vacant Position

Lori Hirshfield, Staff Liaison