

**Location:** Hood Room, Matthews Town Hall

**Date:** August 28, 2018

**Time:** 6:00-7:00

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**Present:** Kerry Lamson, Laura Snead, Natisha Rivera-Patrick, Natasha Edwards, Carlo McCoy, Michael Ham, Kim Gossage, and Carol Fox.

**Absent:** Robin Scott, Warren Wooten, and Chuck Wilson.

**Meeting Start:** 6:03

## **Introductions**

The meeting was opened with introductions, residency, education, and background work experience on committee members. The chairmen of the committee, Kerry Lamson, gave a brief synopsis of the work and data collected up to the date of the meeting. Among the topics discussed include the formation of the housing committee, the work he hopes to accomplish, and existing data on Matthews housing. A handout of baseline definitions related to housing, income, and the economy was given to members and discussed.

## **I. Definition of Affordable Housing**

### **A. Preliminary Definition**

- Kerry stated the first order of business was to develop a preliminary definition to guide the rest of the study. This would become the basis for any policy suggestions. He stated that defining what housing and affordable means to the town of Matthews would be the biggest challenge.

### **B. Establish which language to use and which to avoid.**

- The group discussed current definitions of affordable housing, including those from Matthews, Davidson, and the federal government.

- Kerry stated that we cannot define affordable housing as low income because it would bring negative connotations but is also not factual.
  - What affordable housing is depends on the community. A \$200,000 home may be affordable in Matthews if the median income is 70,000, but not in other communities. Need to focus on all aspects of housing affordability, not just low income housing.
  - Discussed median income for the town of Matthews.
    - Kerry discussed the dangerous side of using median; there are a lot of people above and below the median line and we need to be cognizant of all socio-economic levels.
- Government definition is the 30% income definition (including utilities)
  - Essentially, you are living in an affordable house if you aren't spending more than 30% of your income.
  - 30% is an understandable norm but what is affordable is different for everyone
  - Federal definition creates income brackets.
  - Natisha stated 30% definition is a standard and would make it easy to align with government regulation (Funds from the government, up zoning inclusion for upper class)
- Need to use data to back our definition and conclusion
  - Workforce wages, salary ranges from Matthews employees, data on housing
  - Ensure data is up to date and relevant

## **II. Discussed data and research gathered from members.**

- Carol suggested looking at older homes in the area and preserving them.
  - Government could supplement or fix the rent for a time period.
  - This is a good way to keep people, especially the older population, in their homes (Aging in place)
  - Problem: this might make the homes go up in value.
  - Natisha discussed the last home her organization (Habitat for Humanity) built. 3 bedroom home, relatively expensive.
  - HFH goal is home ownership but they are also looking at other options since existing housing stock in the area is usually expensive, 3 bedrooms and more. Hard to find land where one story, family homes can be built.
  - Possibly look at land in foreclosure or areas that we can redevelop
- Discussed the possibility of doing a housing inventory

- Planning board is inundated with variances for really expensive homes
- Seniors cannot downsize anymore because there isn't anything affordable in the area.
- Carol stated that prices have hit a wall. Sellers are getting too optimistic and have to reduce their asking price.
- Not a lot of land left to develop in Matthews
- Apartments being built in entertainment district start at \$1500
- Tiny homes are an option. Many are being built on properties and rented out
  - Natisha stated that the value of tiny homes is jumping.
- Giving examples (here is a teacher and her family, this is what she can afford)
  - Making it personal

### III. Review Activities and Milestone for Next Meeting

- Play with definition of affordable housing
  - Avoid words or phrases with negative connotations
  - \*Housing doesn't have to mean ownership. Consider supplemental income housing, apartments, etc....
- Send any contact info, contacts, or data to Meric
- Meric is the focal point for collecting data
  - Kerry has collected data on Polaris
  - Mike is doing rental data
  - Meric is consolidation point
- Send Meric the days of the week that are best to meet
  - Don't need to meet twice if they can meet two hours
  - ReStore can host
  - Mondays are bad for board/town meetings
- Discuss people who have connections with the chamber to find wage data
  - Possibility of surveying chamber and asking them three simple questions
  - \*\*\*action item
  - Kelly is involved with chamber, Kim will reach out to Kelly
  - Email or survey monkey
  - Carol can look at Charlotte chamber data collection on Matthews
    - Mecklenburg may also have info
  - We are in data gathering mode

- Housing stock, population, data on wages
- Materials and land is a barrier to affordable housing
  - Matthews prices ourselves out because we have high requirements (all brick)
  - Need to listen to our friends in the development community