FINAL

LEBANON HOUSING TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Remote Via Microsoft Teams
LebanonNH.gov/Live
Monday, March 17, 2025
8:15 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT: **Ryan Dube, John D'Entremont, Andrew Faunce, Tracy Hutchins, Ellen Smith Ahern**

MEMBERS ABSENT: **Mayor Tim McNamara, Susan Almy, David Duncan, Tia Winter**

STAFF PRESENT: **Mark Goodwin, GIS Coordinator, Catheryn Hembree, Associate Planner, Nathan Reichert, Director, Planning & Development**

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1. CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order at 8:18AM by Vice Chair Andrew Faunce

Ms. Catheryn Hembree read the preamble.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Andrew Faunce MOVED **to approve February 24, 2025 Minutes. The motion was** ***Seconded by Mr. Ryan Dube.***
Yay 4, Nay 0, Abstained 1 (Mr. John D'Entremont)
**** The MOTION was approved 4-0***

3. STUDY ITEMS:

A. Housing Data Update

Mr. Mark Goodwin presented comprehensive information on Housing Inventory, Housing Trends, Housing Demand Analysis and Housing Tools and Strategies along with substantially more information on the current housing situation in Lebanon. Currently there are 8,043 residential units in the City of Lebanon (and West Lebanon). He showed the breakdown of the housing types. Of these, 2,767 are single family detached homes, 192 Manufactured Homes, 2,958 Multi Family Units (greater than 7 units), and 508 Middle Housing (2-6 Res Units), 568 Subsidized (assistance) & Affordable (based on income) Housing Units or 7% of Total Housing Units (goal is tentatively 10% of all housing), etc.

Mr. Goodwin also shared current information on Cost Points, average cost to build per square foot ($500 per sq. ft.), and a deep dive into the entire portfolio of housing, median value, sales Mean Value (2020-2024). He explained why the sales numbers look high, which is impacted by things such as simple name changes and Cost Points showing various incomes of City positions and how much housing a person could afford at various levels. Area median income (AMI) as of early 2024 is $108,000.

Mr. Reichert stated that it would be useful to know how many single households there are in Lebanon, since this number has grown to about 30% over the last several decades and greatly impacts housing.

Mr. Goodwin's information was provided to all in the agenda packet (prior to this meeting).

B. Housing Needs Assessment Presentation

Mr. Eric Halverson, RKG Associates, Inc. presented Key Insights about Lebanon, including Growing Population and Household Shifts, Highly Competitive Housing Market, Aging Stock, Regional Employment Hub and Housing Affordability

Lebanon's population is growing and is attracting young professionals (predominately ages 25-35), while also retaining long term residents over the age of 40. He noted that the household size is shrinking. Pricing are being pushed higher as the supply becomes more challenging. Housing stock is aging as well, since most owner-occupied homes were built before 1980, and many dating back to before 1939.

He stated that the median home price is approximately $450,000 and average rent around $2,448 (this has gone up exponentially since 2019. . This causes approximately 43% of renters to be cost burdened and 22% to be severely cost burdened, since their rent is more that 50% of their monthly income.

Households earning more than $100,000 **-** $150,000 annually is growing exponentially. The median *family* income for Grafton county is $108,300.

Approximately 45% of Lebanon working residents both live and work in the City. This is a high number for a community of this size. 83% of workers commute to Lebanon from surrounding communities; Lebanon is a regional employment hub as previously noted.

Mr. Halverson shared that a majority of renters have moved to Lebanon since 2018, whereas most homeowners have lived in Lebanon since before 2010. There is a gap of housing available for higher income earners, hence this market competes with potential buyers in the middle market and are spending less on housing than they "should", according to HUD. On the other end of the spectrum, lower income households are sometimes forced into spending a disproportionate amount of their income for rentals than they should, and this then forces these households to spend less on other items that they would normally use their income on.

It was agreed that learning more about the motivation of buyers would be useful to inform decisions going forward. Also, RKG is going to look at the financials including the return on taxes (this was an ad on to the scope of the original considerations), to look at other housing options along with their rates of return.

It was mentioned that the City has a strong Conservation Commission and some on this commission feel that there should be absolutely no building in Lebanon.

Mr. D'Entremont said that the new school enrollment information and trends is now out and available. Ms. Hembree will get this information to the consultants.

Mr. Fran Cassell, Ward 2 (member of the public), asked if the City had any information about the apartments that are being built and how many are housing employees of Dartmouth Health. He commented that the City is shouldering much of the expenses specifically for DH, and wondered how some of these costs could be passed on to others. He cited numbers from earlier budget meetings about the number of residents versus the number of people here during the daytime. He also said that if Lebanon keeps on taking on other responsibilities, the tax rates will never come down.

Mr. Dube reminded all that we have nearby communities in White River Junction and Hartford, VT who have recently worked on larger communities projects and have recently done some larger complexes and infrastructure projects.

Mr. Goodwin commented again that it's important to know earnings in household (one or two or more persons). He also observed that teasing out Lebanon from Grafton County incomes would be relevant. Mr. Dube said HUD will have this information in the near future, utilizing Lebanon City proper, by zip code, as well as more nuanced details on rental values specific to Lebanon and other areas.

A Task Force member asked for raw date on seasonal rental vs. non-owner occupied, one year versus several years. Also, how many are remote versus local employment, and what the driving factor is for people being here.

Mr. Andrew Faunce MOVED to extend the meeting to 10:15AM.
Seconded by Mr. Ryan Dube
****The MOTION was approved unanimously***

C. Community Engagement Logo and Plan

Ms. Liz Kelly, Resilience Planning and Design, shared the recent version of the proposed logo, Living in Lebanon utilizing the feedback from the prior meeting. The goal is to get this rolled out soon. The logo was agreed on.

Next, she spoke about their Outreach Plan including public participation and has incorporated input into the plan. They will go into more detail about the outreach plan at the next meeting, and they have shared an updated plan in the interim.

Mr. Steve Whitman, Resilience Planning and Design said they discuss the Outreach Plan in depth at the next meeting. Also, because of the successful passing of the pattern zoning, they will get started on the regulatory policy audit using information from the pattern zoning.

4. OLD BUSINESS: None

5. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Letter of support for Minimum Housing Standards Ordinance

Ms. Hembree stated that a letter of support is needed for Mr. Leigh Hayes (if they are in agreement), so that he can present this to the City Council in April. Mr. Faunce asked for a fact sheet from Planning. Planning asked for them to submit their comments to them. This Task Force agreed to have Vice Chair Faunce prepare a letter of support. Ms. Hembree will give him a draft to work from and markup.

6. OTHER BUSINESS None

7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: None

ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. Tracy Hutchins MOVED for adjournment
Seconded by Mr. John D'Entremont

****The MOTION was approved unanimously***
The meeting was adjourned at 10:16 AM

Respectfully submitted,
Cinda Mersel
Recording Secretary