



**LEBANON HOUSING TASK FORCE  
APRIL 6, 2026 - 8:15 AM  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL OR  
REMOTE VIA VIRTUAL PLATFORM  
LEBANONNH.GOV/LIVE**

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**1. Call to Order**

- A. To participate in this meeting, please [join live via Microsoft Teams](#) or call 929-229-5356 (access code: 345 896 163#). If you have trouble accessing this meeting, please email [Catheryn Hembree](#).

**2. Approval of Minutes**

- A. March 16, 2026

**3. Study Items**

- A. Housing Chapter Discussion

**4. Old Business**

**5. New Business**

**6. Other Business**

**7. Future Agenda Items**

**8. Adjournment**

**The order of agenda items is subject to change.**

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Any person with a disability who wishes to attend this public meeting and needs additional accommodation, please contact the ADA coordinator at City Hall by calling 603-448-4220 at least 72 hours in advance so that the City can make any necessary arrangements.

If you have any questions, please contact the Planning and Development Department by sending an e-mail to [planning@lebanonnh.gov](mailto:planning@lebanonnh.gov), or by calling 603-448-1457, or by visiting the Planning and Development Office located in City Hall during regular work hours, Monday through Thursday, 7AM to 5PM. You can view the entire agenda packet on the City's website at [LebanonNH.gov/Agendas](#).

DRAFT

**LEBANON HOUSING TASK FORCE  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
Remote Via Microsoft Teams  
LebanonNH.gov/Live  
Monday March 16, 2026  
8:15AM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tim McNamara, Andrew Faunce, Vice Chair,  
Ryan Dube, Sarah Riley (virtual), Ellen Smith Ahern, Tia Winter

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** John D'Entremont, Dave Duncan (Alt.)

**STAFF PRESENT:** Nathan Reichert, Director, Planning & Development,  
Cathryn Hembree, Associate Planner, Planning & Development

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1 **1. CALL TO ORDER:**

2  
3 Mr. Tim McNamara, Chair, started the meeting at 8:15AM.

4  
5 Ms. Catheryn Hembree read the Preamble.

6  
7 **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

8 A. December 15, 2026

9  
10 *Vice Chair Andrew Faunce MOVED to approve the December 15, 2025 minutes as amended.*  
11 *Seconded by Mr. Ryan Dube*

12  
13 *\*The MOTION was approved (4-0)*

14  
15 B. January 29, 2026

16  
17 *Vice Chair Andrew Faunce MOVED to approve the December 15, 2025 minutes as amended.*  
18 *Seconded by Mr. Ryan Dube*

19  
20 *\*The MOTION was approved (4-0)*

21  
22 C. February 9, 2026

23  
24 *Ms. Ellen Smith Ahern MOVED to approved the January 29, 2026 minutes as amended.*  
25 *Seconded by Vice Chair Andrew Faunce*

26  
27 *\*The MOTION was approved (5-0)*

28  
29 **3. STUDY ITEMS:**

30  
31 A. Housing Chapter Discussion

1 Mr. Steve Whitman, Resilience Planning & Design, attended this meeting in person to discuss the fiscal  
2 analysis and the housing impact market analysis. Many members of this Housing Task Force submitted  
3 their comments on these two documents and Mr. Whitman had agreed to provide an update. They've  
4 incorporated all input except for Chair McNamara's which they will work on. RKG asked to push back on  
5 though, from a budget perspective is if they were to change all the fiscal year to 2026, they would in all  
6 likelihood need more of a budget. They don't believe that the outcome is going to be any different though,  
7 if they were to go through and vet all the documents again.

8  
9 The biggest concern is the vacancy data, and Mr. Whitman said if there was a better source of data, they  
10 would use it. Mr. Dube said his concern is that 2 different sources were used for this data, both with major  
11 problems, and yet this information has yet to be reconciled.

12  
13 The vacancy rate in New Hampshire, as well as Lebanon, is realistically approximately 2% to 4%, or  
14 lower. It was acknowledged that the data is difficult to get; while further examination is preferred, given  
15 they are more than a year into this process, and there is not a gold standard data source, it was agreed that  
16 they will state disclaimers and acknowledge discrepancies, where needed with this information. Also, Mr.  
17 Whitman said that he will work with RKG (Eric and Allison), to try to improve on this or rectify it,  
18 possibly citing a more realistic rate.

19  
20 The formatting and layout of this needs to flow better, and also, they need to provide interpretative  
21 language. They will also add the BEA Study (Business and Economic Affairs). This is a recent and good  
22 study of key housing topics and compares multiple counties and multiple municipalities within New  
23 Hampshire. Ms. Hembree will be working on this document (from RKG) so that it is easier to interpret.

24  
25 Mr. Dube added that we should be able to align the BEA data with the Lebanon pipeline data and our  
26 actual permitting. *Our own assessment data needs to be accurate.* All the data needs to link together and  
27 simply have the most accurate data for a given point in time. Chair McNamara said that we can add  
28 something to the effect of "since this report was issued, these things have changed" or whatever is  
29 appropriate to note more recent available information. Mr. Whitman said that they will work with  
30 Planning and RKG, and double check all key data that is being included in the Housing Chapter.

31  
32 Mr. Reichert added that Mr. Tim Corwin, Deputy Director, Planning and Development, has an accurate  
33 spreadsheet going back to 2004 so he and Ms. Hembree will utilize this data as well.

34  
35 Mr. Whitman said that the information the TF gave was very helpful and resulted in some changes.  
36 Suggested additions that will strengthen the proposed actions include:

- 37 • Support for unhoused residents
- 38 • Emergency shelter assistance for homeowners
- 39 • Engaged strengthening housing rehabilitation programs
- 40 • Expanding employer supported housing initiatives (incl. idea of non-profit entity)
- 41 • Clarifying incentives to occupy vacant housing

42  
43 Clarifying the term "missing middle"; explaining and showing what it means (or not using it) is also in  
44 order. This is a huge education opportunity and can be addressed in the Chapter.

45  
46 Mr. Dube asked if this is the structure that they want to use. ***He suggested that the document open with***  
47 ***the topics that are on the minds of most people, such as housing affordability to start.*** The Chapter  
48 should be in a logical, easy to follow format, with the key housing issues for Lebanon being laid out in a  
49 prioritized order. Bold headings make sense and possibly use their survey data and action lists.

50

1 Mr. Whitman suggested they move on to complete a Housing Chapter, and that in doing so, they might  
2 find more actions to include in this Chapter. Chair McNamara said that he thinks the document should  
3 start with the concerns and the goals and then follow with everything else. The average viewer will go to  
4 the bullet points and by starting with concrete concerns and goals, the reader will see that this Housing  
5 Task Force has understood what the public has been saying.

6  
7 For example, it needs to be stated that there is a consensus and concern that the City has overbuilt studios  
8 and one bedroom apartments; both residents and some businesses agree on this and they do not want more  
9 large apartment complexes. This is not what they see as Lebanon's future.

10  
11 Mr. Whitman added that actions will be organized in a matrix, and they can lead with the prioritized 4-6  
12 or whatever the number of key topics/actions they want to lead with.

13  
14 Mr. Dube specifically stated (in his comments to the consultants) that one action item is to incentivize or  
15 encourage the creation of family sized housing options defined as two plus bedrooms, units in both owner  
16 occupied and rental housing. He thinks they have a good starting document; Mr. Whitman will check but  
17 he thinks they have already incorporated Mr. Dube's feedback.

18  
19 Chair McNamara asked that they clarify modular homes as they are quite different from manufactured  
20 housing (if this is included in the Chapter); putting a hammer in the field versus putting a hammer at the  
21 factory. As an aside, at a State level, both types of housing can go in any zoning district that allows  
22 single family homes, as of January 2026.

23  
24 Ms. Smith Ahern asked about including income based housing, and if they want to include something in  
25 the Chapter. Ms. Winter said that many landlords do not want to accept Section 8 vouchers, because they  
26 do not want the State coming in and telling them to fix up a unit or a property. As previously stated, one  
27 of Mr. Dube's suggestions is that they include minimum standards for renting; this aligns with key  
28 feedback from many residents- a top 4 issue among this group; a minimum ordinance standard and what  
29 that might look like. He provided some specifics in his document to RKG.

30  
31 Mr. Reichert added that there are some "powerful" landlords in Lebanon, and some of these landlords  
32 bully their tenants. He said that the City could rework this balance of power and make things more  
33 equitable and the living conditions acceptable, if the City gets behind this and aligns the needed resources  
34 to accomplish this. The goal is to have their own set of standards for the rentals here in Lebanon, not to  
35 necessarily prescribe exactly how this is accomplished. This will be an action item at the City level, and  
36 the City can then decide if they keep the same enforcement regime but with more options because of the  
37 minimum standards, or if they want to go with an increased enforcement capacity. This Task Force can  
38 lay out the problem, and the City Manager will oversee the solution.

39  
40 Ms. Smith Ahern suggested they *dream or aspire to bigger goals* and be sure these are articulated in the  
41 Chapter. Lebanon can be a role model for other towns.

42  
43 Mr. Dube spoke of the **predatory landlord practices for fee structures** that he's been seeing over the  
44 last approximate 10 years. For example, the landlord advertises the rent at \$1,400 a month. Then there is a  
45 \$400 least signing fee and a \$40 a month maintenance fee, even though these are not HOAs, where one  
46 would expect to pay for 24 hour maintenance for the unit. These fee structure practices dramatically and  
47 negatively impact the affordability of housing. Mr. Dube suggest that these fees should be prominently  
48 disclosed as part of the monthly rent; *be transparent*. It affects the families signing up to rent units. Many  
49 lease contracts are 40 pages long and most laypeople do not have the ability to understand these in there  
50 entirety.

1 Chair McNamara wants to be sure that a pathway to home ownership, and wealth building along with  
2 aging in place, or having a place to go, are all moved to the forefront of the Chapter as they are all key  
3 issues brought to this Task Force's attention again and again. Given this is the number one problem  
4 moving forward with housing, he thinks that establishing the desirability of that continuum early on in the  
5 forefront of the document, and very prominently, as critical bullet points is of utmost importance.  
6

7 Ms. Tia Winter asked about cooperative housing and Chair McNamara said it is in the proposed  
8 document. Rent to own was discussed, but it was agreed this is a conversation for Concord or the Federal  
9 Government; there is some narrative on this topic under Co-Housing that can open the conversation.  
10

11 The desire of preservation and enhancement of new and existing neighborhoods needs to be included in  
12 the Chapter, again as a key point. Ms. Smith Ahern revisited building a sense of neighborhood in more far  
13 flung parts of Lebanon. We also need to be sure that these places have public transit (not stranded if they  
14 do not have a vehicle) and safe, connecting bike paths as well. At the same time, Mr. Dube said they can  
15 highlight some of the things that Lebanon does very well, by utilizing these same things, public  
16 transportation and bike paths.  
17

18 Chair McNamara said that there are limits to growth because we have a set amount of land. We know  
19 what the limits of our existing infrastructure are and we are not going to significantly expand this beyond  
20 where it currently is. So, with respect to Route 120 and North Lebanon, what does this group want to see  
21 within these remaining areas? Do they want less dense, two story buildings, with a fewer number of  
22 units? Or do they want to max it out? Based on what he (and this Task Force) have heard, from the  
23 community, they want neighborhoods built with fewer units, available for ownership, rather than blocks  
24 of apartments. This community has this choice, and now is the time for these choices to be made.  
25

26 Vice Chair Faunce said regarding infrastructure, there are plenty of places for new housing to be, so he  
27 proposes a vision of building in areas such as on Spencer Street, Main Street in West Lebanon, the Mall  
28 in Lebanon, etc., can help resident build wealth by property ownership, and so a mix of these and also  
29 very dense housing in a walkable downtown area. From this vision follows what we have as levers of  
30 incentives and disincentives to try and move in the direction that Lebanon needs to go with housing. We  
31 need to stop just plunking down properties that are disconnected from any other neighborhoods. Chair  
32 McNamara said that one of their goals needs to be what is the end state. And the end state is *not* to build  
33 as many units as possible everywhere you can. **This end state needs to be in this Master Plan now,  
34 front and center.**  
35

36 Vice Chair Faunce said that **"if we allow ourselves not to chase the easy, we might get that which we  
37 desire"**. Mr. Dube added that people are creative, and they will come up with solutions to things that we  
38 are thinking of right now. Chair McNamara added that if creating that quality of living enhances the  
39 value, it provides more incentive for people to get creative and do those things. He cited Portsmouth  
40 having the graphic of economic vitality. It's because it is so densely developed in its downtown, and there  
41 is so much value there and for the most part the outlying area remains as it has been.  
42

43 Vice Chair Faunce said that they cannot be soft on describing what they want; they need to contain these  
44 ideas so that they can work together and produce the desired end goal.  
45

46 Chair McNamara said that it's important that they don't let one chapter of the Master Plan get done now,  
47 and another one three years from now. *We really need the Master Plan redone now* and he thinks that we  
48 probably have support for that kind of investment now, because it is critical to everything else.  
49

1 Vice Chair Faunce said that currently the Master Plan is a “grab bag” of many people saying anything  
2 about any particular area of interest. The Chapters are not reconciled with one another. And perhaps they  
3 cannot be reconciled because for example you have economic development and conservation -fish and  
4 fowl. So, do we even attempt to reconcile the Chapters, or do we simply declare that our Master Plan is  
5 limited to the vision and to the land use chapters? They don’t necessarily need to be reconciled but they  
6 need to be bold statements about what it is that are of interest in those areas, because right now, it’s in  
7 between.

8  
9 He went on to say that he thinks if they look at the Master Plan as being *vision and land use*, and that they  
10 put their attention there, and update this regularly, the other chapters are effectively appendices. They are  
11 informative but they are not required by statute. This would be a way of managing the tension.

12  
13 Mr. Reichert said that the Master Plan from 2012 simply does not reflect this post COVID Lebanon, and  
14 what our reality is here today. He too thinks it would be appropriate to redo the Master Plan. This would  
15 entail a massive engagement with the community along with the City Council and other key parties.  
16 Layered conversations from a planning perspective is key.

17  
18 We all know that the pandemic had a dramatic impact on housing and these changes need to be reflected  
19 in the Chapter. Also, the fact that we have had incredible growth of the hospital and some very successful  
20 businesses that did not exist 10 years ago. These too driving the demand for more housing, because we  
21 have so many more people working here. Also, post pandemic, people can live here and work here on a  
22 day to day basis for a company anywhere (e.g. silicone valley). This sort of dichotomy is something that  
23 is very new and post pandemic. Also, these types of high paid, high skilled jobs frequently attract people  
24 to positions in Lebanon, and not necessarily be filled by residents of Lebanon. There are limits to growth  
25 and a conversation/plan about these factors needs to be had.

26  
27 The economic disparity for many of the jobs that are being created are forcing a portion of the community  
28 out of the community, and yet an economically diverse community is a goal by many people; there is a  
29 benefit to that. Diversity should be reflected in housing.

30  
31 Many people that get forced out of Lebanon are in the lowest income categories, whereas previously there  
32 was affordable housing for them here in Lebanon. He cited an example over the last 5 years where a \$900  
33 a month unit now cost \$1,700 a month, for the exact same unit, with no major improvements. The  
34 demand here has vastly outstripped the supply. This has displaced our current Lebanon residents that did  
35 not have the same level of economic ascension that the incoming population has.

36  
37 The economy might not keep growing here if Lebanon cannot house families and provide other options  
38 for people that work for local businesses. For example, perhaps a single professional started working here,  
39 then starts a family and will then need completely different housing and ownership than they needed  
40 previously. Mr. Dube said that housing and the economy go hand and hand, and yet we cannot exactly  
41 predict either. Chair McNamara added that the Housing section needs to reflect that we want to retain and  
42 enhance a diversified housing mix, so that we can have an economically diverse population.

43  
44 Mr. Dube said that May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, the government is coming out with an official median income  
45 determination for the current 2026 cycle. He’ll be interested to see if their data shows any spikes, and in  
46 particular what they show for Lebanon. This new survey will have data completely post COVID. Their  
47 survey data usually skews low given they use a 40% percentile median, not 50%.

48  
49 *Vice Chair Faunce added that another suggestion that will be included in this Chapter is a*  
50 *recommendation to look at tax relief as a means to make it easier for current residents living on fixed*

1 *incomes. Elderly exemptions could be increased. This could help augment the imbalance of supply and*  
2 *demand and allow people to age in place in their current homes.*

3  
4 ***Mr. Reichert added that not acting, “doing nothing”, will get the City of Lebanon closer to \$1,000,000***  
5 ***average sale price than \$400,000 average sale price. We are at an inflection point.***

6 ***Chair Riley said that the status quo is not getting us anywhere.***

7  
8 Mr. Dube stated if we really want to see change, they should make a point in their Chapter and consider a  
9 reimagination of the tax structure. Also, he would like to see wording that encourages the desired results  
10 for local ownership rather than a negative disincentive for large out of town developers. Flip the current  
11 wording around and encourage local ownership and management practices that enhance resident stability.  
12 There are a few areas in the document that this mindset could be used for – flip the stick to a carrot and  
13 this can also help get support for the Housing Chapter.

14  
15 Mr. Whitman said that this conversation was extremely helpful for him. He will attend the Planning  
16 Board meeting next week. He proposed they work on writing the first Draft of this Housing Chapter and  
17 they will work with the Planning staff to accomplish this. This first Draft will be provided to the Housing  
18 Task Force, in advance of their next meeting.

19  
20 **4. OLD BUSINESS:**

21 **5. NEW BUSINESS:**

22  
23 **6. OTHER BUSINESS:**

24  
25 Chair McNamara proposed that they still need to vote today on the remaining schedule for the Housing  
26 Task Force. The new Spring proposed schedule for Monday meetings is:

27  
28 April 6, 2026

29 April 13, 2026

30 May 4, 2026

31 May 18, 2026

32 June 1, 2026

33 June 15, 2026

34  
35 ***Vice Chair Faunce MOVED to adopt this revised schedule***

36 ***Seconded by Ms. Tia Winter***

37  
38 ***\*The MOTION was approved (6-0)***

39  
40 **7. ADJOURNMENT:**

41  
42 ***Vice Chair Faunce MOVED for adjournment***

43 ***Seconded by Ms. Tia Winter***

44  
45 ***\*The MOTION was approved (6-0)***

46 ***The meeting adjourned at 9:47AM.***

47  
48 Respectfully submitted,

49 Cinda Mersel

50 Recording Secretary

## Chapter 07 — Housing Chapter (Lebanon, NH) — Outline of Sections

2026 Version to be Informed by:

- Housing Needs Assessment,
- Market Analysis,
- Policy Audit,
- Public Input

### 1. Vision & Purpose

- Broad housing goals and guiding principles.
- Emphasis on providing a range of housing options that support community character and long-term quality of life.

### 2. Issues & Priorities

- Key housing needs identified by the City.
- Importance of creating livable, walkable, and well-designed neighborhoods.
- Considerations related to affordability, aging population, workforce needs, and changing demographics.

### 3. Existing Conditions & Trends

- **Housing Supply**
  - Inventory of current housing stock: single-family, duplex, multi-family, and manufactured homes.
  - Tenure patterns (owner/renter) and spatial distribution across urban, suburban, and rural areas.
- **Housing Affordability**
  - Economic and demographic context shaping housing demand.
  - Factors influencing affordability for households across income levels, including workforce and employer needs.
- **Neighborhood Character and Design**
  - Existing neighborhood patterns, traditional development forms, and design characteristics.

- How current design contributes to livability, walkability, and sense of place.

#### **4. Future Challenges & Opportunities**

- ***Planning Techniques and Principles***

- Tools, regulatory approaches, and strategies to guide future housing development.
- Considerations for zoning updates, design standards, and long-term planning alignment.

- ***Housing Supply and Demand***

- Anticipated trends in population, household formation, and market needs.
- Opportunities for increasing supply through infill, redevelopment, and new development areas.

- ***Housing Affordability***

- Expected pressures on affordability and opportunities to expand attainable options.
- Potential programs, partnerships, and regulatory changes the City may consider.

- ***Neighborhood Character and Design***

- Opportunities to reinforce and enhance neighborhood identity.
- Balancing growth with design quality, historic patterns, and community expectations.

#### **5. Outcomes & Strategies**

- Reference to housing recommendations being incorporated into the broader Master Plan.
- Strategies or actions to realize the housing goals —including zoning, land use regulation adjustments, incentives, and coordination among city departments and stakeholders.