

FINAL

**LEBANON HOUSING TASK FORCE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Remote Via Microsoft Teams
LebanonNH.gov/Live
Tuesday, January 29, 2026
11:00AM AM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tim McNamara, Andrew Faunce, Vice Chair, Dave Duncan (Alt.)
Ryan Dube, Sarah Riley, Ellen Smith Ahern

MEMBERS ABSENT: John D'Entremont

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

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Tim McNamara, Chair, started the meeting at 11:00AM.

Mr. Nate Reichert read the Preamble.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. October 20, 2025

Chair Tim McNamara MOVED to approve the October 20, 2025 minutes as written.

**The MOTION was approved (5-0).*

B. November 17, 2025

Chair Tim McNamara MOVED to approve the November 17, 2025 minutes as written.

**The MOTION was approved (4-0), 2 abstained*

3. STUDY ITEMS:

A. Discussion: General Commercial-One: Use Table and Appendix A: Definitions

Chair Tim McNamara said that at their last meeting, they discussed potentially making some modifications to the proposed housing types to be allowed in the GC-1 zoning district. The concern that was expressed was that by allowing multi-family dwellings without any further definition in the new GC-1 zone, this would essentially continue to allow what we have on Mt. Support Road and to some extent, to just South of Centerra.

The input that this Housing Task Force has received from the community, is that there is a very limited interest in seeing more of that housing type in the City of Lebanon, and that people prefer something more “neighborhood friendly”. Mr. John D'Entremont shared a note with the TF (since he could not be at

today's meeting) that said that the kind of housing in the areas stated above, if allowed to continue, really changes the character of the City of Lebanon, even more than it's already been changed by the units that are there today.

The idea for today's meeting is to change definitions a bit, so that we allow housing developments in the GC-1 district but bring it down to a reduced scale than what has been built on Mount Support Road and thereby allow for more owner-occupied housing. For example, townhouses are typically owner-occupied due to the economic factor.

Staff was asked to draft some proposed amendments, then to discuss allowing GC-1 new construction with proposed modifications that would allow by right, multi-family units but cap these to 6 units or less, keeping it a smaller scale and to separately allow townhouse construction (no limit on the numbers). Historically, we have not had a definition for townhouse.

Mr. Nate Reichert presented maps showing what the areas currently look like, and what they could look like with the proposed changes which he also shared. Additionally, he provided a handout with these proposed definitions.

In the GC-1 District 305-A

- Remove "**multi-family dwelling**" as a permitted use
- Add "**multi-family dwelling (6 dwelling units or less)**" as a permitted use
- Add "**townhouse**" as a permitted use

In Appendix A, add the following definition:

- **TOWNHOUSE:** a *one-family dwelling* having direct ground level access to the outdoors and which (a) is part of a multi-dwelling unit *building* within which the *dwelling units* are attached horizontally in a linear arrangement, (b) is separated from any adjoining *dwelling unit* by a wall extending from the foundation through the roof

It was agreed that the definitions should be kept as simple and understandable as possible. Mr. Ryan Dube said that the wording needs to be accurate, for example townhouse vs. townhouse unit have two different meanings. Mr. McNamara concurred.

The origin of this discussion is as a result of formal and informal meetings with residents over the past two years of learning what existing residents of Lebanon want to see Lebanon develop into. Residents have shared their wish for focus on the "missing middle" with more owner-occupied housing on a human scale.

Chair McNamara clarified that the City cannot force private developers to build one thing or another, and that if they say that in these areas, you cannot build another Mount Support Road, this could delay building of any sort in those areas, for a long time. That is until the market changes dramatically. *But if they don't define what can be built, and the large apartment complexes are what continue to get built, they are there permanently, and the City cannot then go back and change that.*

Ms. Sarah Riley asked about density. She also said that she likes the more livable scale, maybe from limited sized developments. Coming from a conservation perspective, she also appreciates the benefits of going *up* in order to minimize the footprint on the land.

Chair McNamara added that if they stay in the GC-1, they could theoretically build the same number of townhouses that you could if you did a multi-family building. Mr. Dube commented that with the proposed definitions for GC-1, they are letting developers know what they can and cannot build, and that if they want to build in Lebanon, they can only do this in two ways. He shared his concerns that the land could stay undeveloped for some time. The alternative of more large apartment complexes can be *part* of the solution for the City of Lebanon.

Chair McNamara asked Mr. Dave Duncan (Dartmouth Medical Center) his perspective, if they incentivized to the extent they can, a townhouse type of development, which is likely to be two or more-bedroom units, is that where his (Dartmouth Medical Center) demand is? Mr. Dave Duncan responded “absolutely” and that the area does not need any more apartments. He said that the amount of professionals (RNs, lab techs, X-ray techs, MRI techs, surgical techs, trained experts (physicians typically find their way), these people all want places to buy and to live, that is not an apartment. The amount of their turnover at year 3-5 is not sustainable. They interview everyone that leaves, and they make statements such as “I have just spent \$30,000 a year paying rent, and I want out of an apartment. They want to buy their own homes and townhouses are a viable option. “Your feet can touch the ground”.

He thinks any concerns about the need for more apartments is no longer valid as this is already an oversupplied market and will become more so once Dartmouth College opens up 1,100 new dorms on campus. The supply is already there.

He believes that any townhouses that are built will be sold prior to construction being finished. He shared that Dartmouth placed 1,300 new employees in the last 12 months, without any problems getting apartments for them.

He added that they will not recommend or put any of their new employees in studio apartments. They do not stay in them, and once they get a skill, they would choose to leave the area because they are still living in the equivalent of their dorm room.

Vice Chair Andrew Faunce said that major employers are taking more of an interest in creating better housing for their employees, such as, for example, subsidized housing, and a hybrid employer sponsored housing as well as the typical market rate housing. This hybrid housing is currently being built by Dartmouth, and recruitment and retention are more important than turning a profit on these types of housing projects. In all likelihood, Dartmouth is not alone and there may well be other larger employers (e.g. manufacturers) in the area with these same employee retention issues, looking for housing options to improve these. They too may choose to get involved in constructing some of these housing units.

Mr. Dube posed an idea *for some smaller local companies to come together to help create a cottage development, such as 5 employers build 10 units or 30 townhomes. There are numerous benefits for local employers to participate in new housing developments in Lebanon.*

Vice Chair Faunce said that they are trying to create time and space to allow more people to get to their goal of home ownership in Lebanon. Ms. Riley said she thinks this is a worthy goal.

The question was asked where else is there capacity for multi-family structures of the type that we’re going to consider limiting here? Ms. Cathryn Hembree said there are limited spaces close to being built out, such as one small GC district, that has only 4 parcels. R1, (Residential 1) and CBD (Central Business District), LD (Lebanon Downtown), and that all allow for multi-family dwellings. LD would allow for infill and some towers at current green fields.

Vice Chair Faunce reiterated that if they continue to let the current market determine what is going to be built, the City of Lebanon will end up with more mid-rise rental developments of studios and one-bedroom apartments being built. Once they are built, they are there forever.

Ms. Riley said that this is part of a bigger solution. She added that current allowances in R1 might be part of the problem as well.

Vice Chair Faunce expounded that they might currently have the opportunity to produce a kind of coherent well thought out vision for how the City of Lebanon develops. For example, they could depict things like models for the reuse of the parking lot behind City Hall and have housing there. He is not sure if the people that responded to surveys have looked at development in a broader context and mindset, rather they may have looked at this as a NIMBY type of thing, as opposed to a place where we actually might want density.

He thinks it comes down to identifying a vision for how the City of Lebanon develops and enlisting people to come on board and to share their ideas and buy into this. He likes the idea of a visioning exercise, which this Housing Task Force can work on in future meetings.

Today the focus, out of necessity, is to comment on whether the GC-1 redefinition is a good idea. City Council will be voting on this next week. This is about the far future of Lebanon and what the residents want to see Lebanon become. They have spoken, and do not want more of what has already been built on Mount Support Road (a rental community).

There is a willingness that it may slow down development of new housing to restrict it to a smaller scale in these limited areas. Chair McNamara reiterated that if they continue with no changes, there will be more large apartments rental complexes, and then that land is gone.

He is cautiously optimistic that they may see more employer sponsored home ownership options, as Mr. Dave Duncan and Mr. Ryan Dube spoke about.

Ms. Riley said this is a massive shift of the City, and a larger scale than just Centerra and Altaria, and would prefer for GC-1 to start out physically smaller. That is not something they are talking about today, but the changes that they are talking about this morning, changing the massing of the housing that they are introducing into that as an allowable use. This is the smartest thing they can do at this juncture.

Chair McNamara asked if there was general support of disincentivizing large scale multi-family projects. There was a consensus that this Task Force has general support for the change in the zoning table along with the GC-1 proposed definition. They also agreed that they need to finalize the definition of townhouse. They will make a recommendation to the City Council.

Mr. Dave Duncan MOVED to endorse the change of the general commercial one (GC-1) zoning tables to expressly allow a more limited form of multi-family dwellings to six units or less as well as townhouse construction and to disallow higher density mid-rise apartments.

Seconded by Ms. Sarah Riley

****The MOTION was approved (6-0)***

4. OTHER BUSINESS:

5. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

6. ADJOURNMENT:

***Ms. Sarah Riley MOVED for adjournment
Seconded by Vice Chair Andrew Faunce***

****The Vote on the MOTION was approved (6-0)***

The meeting adjourned at 12:13PM

Respectfully submitted,
Cinda Mersel
Recording Secretary