



DRAFT Commission Development Committee Minutes from December 14, 2021

The meeting was held via Zoom using the same link as the preceding Nominating Subcommittee. Chair René Wood called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

Roll call:

René Wood, Sheffield
Kyle Hanlon, North Adams
Doug McNally, Windsor
Sarah Hudson, Tyringham

BRPC Staff: Tom Matuszko, Marianne Sniezek, Kate Hill Tapia, Chris Brown, Chris Skelly

I. Approval of Minutes from May 20, 2021

Kyle Hanlon moved to approve the May 20, 2021 minutes; René Wood seconded. A roll call vote of Kyle Hanlon, René Wood, and Sarah Hudson approved the minutes, with Doug McNally abstaining.

II. Discussion/Possible Action on housing education series for 2022 Commissions meetings; Chris Brown, staff

The Executive Committee asked the Commission Development Committee to determine educational topics for Commission meetings.

Committee members agreed that housing is a relevant and priority topic. The discussion focused on reviewing the Housing Toolbox brainstorm list drafted by BRPC staff Chris Brown and Chris Skelly. Chris and Chris asked for feedback on what should be added or removed and priorities. They emphasized that it is a “living document” that may be updated continuously. What would be most useful to town officials and communities? What knowledge do they need?

“Toolboxes” were developed by BRPC staff years ago as approximately four-page documents to educate communities on planning topics. Tom is resurrecting this format. He also confirmed that upcoming DLTA grants are an opportunity for housing projects.

Topics that were mentioned:

- Zoning expansion
- Housing production plans
- Funding small rehabs for seniors
- Transitional housing (will be added to the list)

- Affordable workforce housing
- Institutions & employers subsidizing development
- Legislation to support smaller houses (more affordable starter homes)
- Funding sources (DHCD/CDGB)
- Housing receivership
- No sewer or water
- Lack of transportation to home or independent living facility
- North Adams:
 - Gentrification – new residents
 - Has lowest median income in the state
 - The city is built out; did adopt 40R
 - Substandard housing

The committee concluded it could not speak for all communities. Commission members should review what their Master Plans say about housing (if they have one), identify the housing stakeholders and what they are doing, and get *their* input and feedback on what trainings would be helpful.

There are existing efforts to reinforce, rather than duplicate, such as the Workforce Board and the Regional Housing Collaborative (1Berkshire, BRPC, and Berkshire Regional Housing Development Corporation). The Collaborative has CHAPA funding to establish a county-wide Housing Coalition. The 1Berkshire survey confirmed the need for housing for professionals.

It was agreed that Tom and 1Berkshire present the Regional Housing Strategy (developed by the Regional Housing Collaborative) at the January Commission meeting. They will also share it with the Berkshire legislative delegation soon.

BRPC staff will reorganize the Toolbox list by topics.

Although Massachusetts has similar communities and mixed opinions on their usefulness, there is a preference for success stories from Berkshire county towns.

Input from the full Commission and Executive Committee is before confirming housing as the topic for the March Commission meeting.

III. Future Educational Topics

This is tabled for now.

IV. Other Business – None

V. Next Meeting – tentatively, along with the Nominating Subcommittee: 5:45 p.m., March 17, 2022, before the full Commission meeting

VI. Adjournment – Doug McNally moved to adjourn the meeting; Sarah Hudson seconded, unanimously agreed. Meeting Adjourned at 5:22 p.m.