

# MEMORANDUM

From: ZPED  
To: Selectboard

Date: 1/8/2024

Re: Weekly Report

- Facilitated the Tri-Town Housing Taskforce meeting, first day of the session and it was attended by Megan from TRORPC, Delsie and Bree Carlson from the West Fairlee Selectboard, highlights:
  - Delsie from West Fairlee reports a conversation with Katie Buckley about her MCAP reply to explain and soften her somewhat negative responses to the survey concerning staffing and capacity issues associated with state funding and granting with a relatively opaque process. Katie communicated that there is a growing recognition of the problem and Josh Hanford is offering his assistance in the area of housing programs and policy.
  - Delsie also said that the Vermod project in the West Fairlee MH park is moving apace with one unit in over the Summer and another two foundations in place, total of five units in.
  - Bean Hall has changed hands and West Fairlee has three relatively large buildings clustered in the village core that are ripe for redevelopment. There are some limitations caused by the location of the river and flood plain issues, TRORPC is going to administer the flood plain.
  - Chris from Fairlee discussed the latest Act 250 reform, the neglect of areas not on central sewer, and made the observation that administration policy seems siloed and isolated. Example of housing projects of less than 30 units not penciling out while the trigger for Act 250 is 25 housing units.
  - Also from Fairlee a Jonah Richard presentation packet for the former Davenport properties clustered around the Main Street/Bridge Street intersection was shared. It is an impressive project and would add six more housing units (four of them three bedroom) as well as rehabilitating some very substandard housing units. It is a pretty good example of what these things should look like.
  - Chris also reported that there is a petition drive to repeal the short term rental ordinance at town meeting. The ordinance is designed to give the Selectboard some power to regulate after the one bite at the apple the DRB has in a conditional use proceeding.
- **Appended from a Meghan Asbury email received after the meeting.**
  - What is the likelihood of a workable redevelopment corporation for the Samual Morey Elementary School property? Uncertain at present but possible in future.
  - Do we have a structure to facilitate more inter-town cooperation and coordination both through state law and on the regional level for things like public safety, EMS and medical services? The easiest thing to do is meet them and talk. Upper Valley Ambulance in town is a multi-town EMS.
  - What is Little River's obligation for local outreach? Uncertain
  - Is there a full understanding of the dilemma of the Act 250 cap at 25 when housing projects of less than 30 units don't pencil out? Folks know that is an issue, don't have more info from legislature yet.
  - "One other thing, water system villages and the regional's position on the way proposed Act 250 changes are completely ignoring them." TRORC (and Peter Gregory specifically) is working with folks in Montpelier to advocate for our communities so that no town gets left out. The legislature

will likely not address the Act 250 proposed changes until May of this year, and effective dates for such changes won't be for another 18-24 months. The changes are being introduced to the legislature and should include towns that do not have water and sewer.

- Had a productive chat with Barrett Brown about the Chapman property. They are looking at timing issues for the lot reunification but under the amended bylaw that will be a simple administrative process. They would like to add four more apartment units to the three already under permit and that will require a conditional use for “apartment building”, site plan review and the requisite state permitting that we front load in our process. The state is going to pour a lot of money into the Gryphon barn and Barrett figures the building would be a knock down without the subsidy. Plan is to sprinkler the building. The back portion of the lot is currently at the back of the priority list as the Chapman Place property is in line for the current round of grant funding. The Apartment work on the Chapman/Gryphon buildings will require septic upgrades and permitting.
- Planning Commission met last Wednesday night. Discussed member recruitment for Town Meeting Day, reviewed last year and discussed priorities for the coming year. The Bridge + Main project was looked over and met with general approval.