

City of Newport
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
March 15, 2022

Members Present: John Monette, Denis Chenette, Amanda Chaput, Kevin Mead, Carole O'Connell

Guests: Jenna O'Farrell, Executive Director, NEKCA, Robert Little, Director of Community Development, Rural Edge, Patrick Shattuck, Executive Director, Rural Edge, Allison Low- NVDA via Remote attendance, George Cudd, Zoning Administrator, and Laura Dolgin, City Manager, Chelsea Edgar, Seven Days Reporter

1. Call to Order, 6:04 P.M.
2. Approval of minutes: Carol O'Connell moved to approve the minutes of March 1, 2022, with Dennis Chenette seconding. The minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Guest Speakers:

Patrick Shattuck- Rural Edge Executive Director: has a current wait list of up to four years for rural subsidized rental housing. There are currently 60 people on the list. Rural Edge serves various populations across the income spectrum. They are pursuing the former Sacred Heart school as a potential redevelopment housing project. Abatement issues with the asbestos are expected to cost roughly \$265,000, plus a \$40,000 per winter heating bill for the property, which was built in 1952 and has been kept heated and vacant since 2007. Rural Edge provides an array of services and works in collaboration with many service providers on quality of life matters for their tenants. An informational brochure is attached to these minutes.

Jenna O'Farrell NEKCA- her organization is a community action agency that provides wellbeing services to people in need and there is a dire need across income spectrums for emergency housing, as well as for safe affordable permanent housing. She stated there currently is no available warming shelter in Orleans County. In addition, there are no private motels that offer the homeless or accept state vouchers for emergency housing. The only available Covid shelter options for the State are currently in Chittenden or Rutland County. Homelessness is defined differently by HUD as compared to the local school system or social services provider which makes capturing accurate numbers of homeless people challenging. There is also a reluctance among the homeless community to relocate to more suitable areas. An informational brochure is attached.

Mr. Shattuck, Ms. O'Farrell and Mr. Little are willing to come back to the planning commission again as the subject matter is involved. The planning commission can see that having their input on the bylaw modernization grant will be helpful.

Post guest discussion: After a lengthy discussion, the commission concludes it is important to mention homelessness in the updated city plan because it affects a large and diverse segment of the population and is a systemic issue that cannot be solved on its own.

4. **Public Comment:** None
5. **Adoption of Annual Rules of Procedure:** Kevin Mead moved to adopt the Rules pending the correction of 2 minor errors, with Carole O'Connell seconding the motion. Unanimously approved, and the chair will sign the corrected copy at the next PC meeting.
6. **Election of Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary:**
 - a. Carole O'Connell moved that the chair remain as John Monette, seconded by Denis Chenette, and the motion was unanimously passed.
 - b. Carol O'Connell moved that the vice chair remain as Denis Chenette with Kevin Mead seconding. The motion passed with Denis Chenete abstaining.,
 - c. Denis Chenette moved to retain Amanda Chaput as secretary with Carole O'Connell seconding, and the motion unanimously passed.
7. **Old Business:** Denis Chenette moved to go into executive session with Alison Low to discuss the vetting of the bylaw modernization consultant proposals with Carole O'Connell seconding at 8:05. The motion unanimously passed.

Out of executive session at 8:15 with no action taken.
8. **New Business:** None
9. **Set draft agenda:** The next agenda will focus on the municipal plan draft reviews:
10. **Motion to Adjourn:** Denis Chenette moved to adjourn at 8:20, with Carole O'Connell seconding.

Respectfully submitted by Zoning Administrator George B. Cudd
Unofficial Until Approved

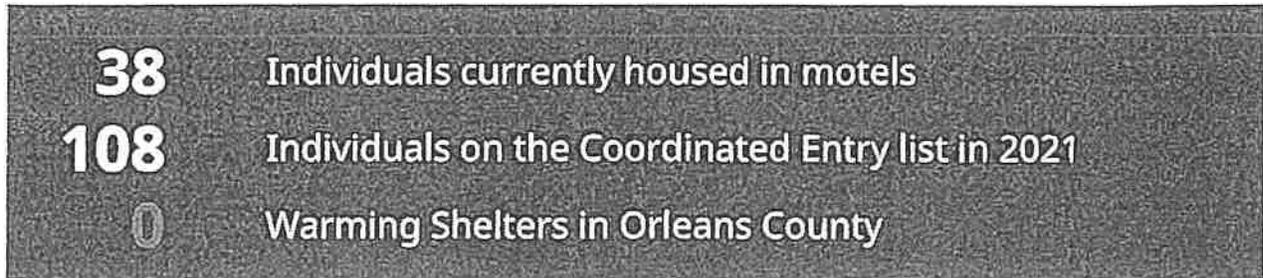
Approved this 5 day of April, 2022



Chair, Newport City Planning Commission



Addressing Homelessness in the Newport Community



NEKCA Resources

- **Housing Counseling:** Housing counselors assess participant needs and establish housing goals, create a plan to solve problems and overcome barriers. We can help work with landlords and provide information about tenants' rights and responsibilities.
- **Emergency Shelter Apartments** based on eligibility. Participants work alongside housing counselors to identify barriers.
- **FIRST Home** Program for Families In Recovery Staying Together. This allows mothers in recovery to rent a room in a safe communal living environment with their children while they continue to work on their path to recovery. Participants work within a tier system with mentors supporting them towards sustainability. This is an 18-24-month program and participants receive a Housing Choice voucher upon completion for a potential lifetime of free rental assistance.
- **Financial Assistance** can support individuals and families with financial assistance to prevent eviction by paying back rent. It can also provide move in costs for those moving from homelessness into housing. Services contingent upon resource availability, income eligibility, and sustainability.
- **VERAP** is a State program that helps people pay their rent for up to a year and/or parts of their utilities upon income eligibility. This resource is limited to one time use as of September 30, 2022.
- **Family Supportive Housing** is a voluntary program providing intensive Case Management for families with minor children who also have a prolonged history with the social justice system, DCF, etc. Program participation is determined solely by Coordinated Entry status and referred to the Housing Review Team for approval.
- **PATH** is a federally funded program that acts as a bridge for the houseless population to obtain all necessary services in order to support their underlying chronic conditions. Requirements include Participants having a dual diagnosis of mental health, substance abuse and chronic homelessness.
- **Rapid Rehousing** provides 2-year housing vouchers to provide stable housing laying the foundation for long-term housing sustainability.
- **Landlord Support** staff Collaborate with landlords and participants to provide education and support.
- **Tenant/Landlord Rights 101** Class Works with landlords and tenants to provide information on being a good tenant, landlord and what VT laws encompass.

Links for more information

HUD Definition of Homelessness

https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HomelessDefinition_RecordkeepingRequirementsandCriteria.pdf

McKinney-Vento Act <https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento-definition/>

Coordinated Entry <https://helpingtohousevt.org/whatwedo/coordinatedentry/overview/>



Housing & Housing Stabilization Services in the Newport Community

Our **Housing Portfolio** consists of 655 affordable housing units and mobile home lots, including 261 in Orleans County and **152** in Newport alone.

Our **Real Estate Development** Pipeline currently has rental housing projects in various stages of development in the Newport and Newport Center communities, along with homeownership opportunities through condominium and single family home development.

Our **Homeownership Center** offers:

- Low-to-moderate income homeowners low-interest loans and grants to make necessary health and safety repairs to their homes. Of the **46** projects completed since 2020, nearly half have been in Orleans County.
- First-time Homebuyer Education, which offers a workshop to prospective homebuyers on the homebuying process, as well as an in-depth look at a person's financials to gauge their readiness for homeownership.
- We operate the **Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP)** to help private landlords access grants to bring their vacant units back online to address the housing shortage.
- In 2021, we launched a **Housing Stabilization Program**, which has already assisted **27** households access funding to pay their back rent and mortgage, tax, and/or utility payments, with ongoing financial counseling, to keep them stable in their housing.

Our Supportive Services through our **Support and Services at Home (SASH)** and Neighborworks **Community Building & Engagement (CB&E)** programs help individuals, both within our portfolio and in the greater community, access the services they need to stay safe and healthy in their homes and connected with their communities.

For More information, visit ruraledge.org

