

Meeting Minutes for VMCC Affordable Housing Meeting 8/22/24

Attendees: Art, Sue, Fred Jordan, Armen, Co Co, Linda, Maya (?), Terry

Next steps

- Terry to write an article for the Beachcomber about the Affordable Housing Committee to increase awareness and potentially attract new members.
 - Terry to send Fred Jordan's contact information and website (londonpermits.com) to committee members.
 - Fred Jordan to share information about permits, development processes, and financing options with the committee.
 - Committee members to attend the VH Housing Forum on October 1st at VCA.
 - Sue and Deborah to present a report on the Accessory Dwelling Unit project at the VH Housing Forum.
 - Terry to explore the possibility of partnering with Habitat for Humanity and creating a volunteer group for home repairs and renovations.
 - Committee to consider organizing a half-day conference or seminar about building affordable ADUs, potentially featuring Fred Jordan and other specialists.
 - Committee to brainstorm ways to promote ADU information at the Senior Center and other community venues.
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Summary

Participant Updates

They discussed the absence of Diane, who was not well, and the introduction of a new participant, Fred Jordan. The group also clarified the name of Nellie, who goes by the nickname Co Co.

Fred's Introduction and Meeting Attendance Discussion

Fred, a land developer and builder who recently moved to Vashon, introduced himself to the group and shared his interest in affordable housing. He mentioned that he had joined the Chamber of Commerce and was looking to collaborate on projects. The group also discussed the declining attendance at their meetings, with a suggestion made to increase awareness through an article in the Beachcomber. The conversation ended with the approval of the agenda, which included announcements about a fundraiser and a housing forum.

Vashon Household Forum, Festival Update

The Vashon Household Forum was discussed, with the date confirmed as October 1st, not October 11th as previously stated. Sue, Deborah, and Diane were tasked with presenting a report on the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) project at the forum, which had been worked on since the last forum.

There was also a discussion about the Strawberry Festival, where there was a lot of interest in the ADU information, with several people expressing interest in undertaking an ADU. However, it was noted that more in-depth inquiries were not made, and the team agreed that they should have collected names to follow up with people.

Promoting Project to Service Groups

Sue and Art discussed the need to promote their project to service and church groups, similar to how the Home Share initiative was launched. They agreed on creating a detailed, step-by-step website to guide interested parties through the process. Art suggested organizing the information in a user-friendly manner, including details on budgets, zoning, and land use rules. Fred, a builder with extensive experience in the area, offered to share their expertise and resources, including their online platform Land and Permits.

Expertise, Collaborations, and Affordable Housing Seminars

Fred, with a background in federal and residential construction shared their expertise and connections with the group, leading to plans for a conference to discuss potential collaborations. Fred also discussed the possibility of organizing affordable housing seminars and open houses, with the involvement of specialists in biology and civil engineering. He considered promoting these events at the senior center and through his publishing arm, and also discussed offering financing solutions for those who cannot afford to build a house. He agreed to meet with Jason, sue and Terry to discuss potential collaboration and shared their goal of making property development information more accessible.

Addressing Affordable Housing Challenges

Arthur discussed the challenges of retaining businesses and employees on the island due to a lack of affordable housing. Co Co emphasized the need for more housing, particularly affordable options, and suggested that focusing on solving the housing problem in one go might not be feasible. The group also discussed the idea of converting empty buildings into affordable housing, but Sue pointed out the financial and practical challenges of

acquiring and maintaining such properties. Terry mentioned a book with more information on this topic, which he had sent out to the group.

Housing Bubble, Regulations, and Solutions

The group discussed the housing bubble and its aftermath, focusing on government and bank regulations that made it difficult to obtain mortgages and loans for building. They explored the potential of incremental growth and local financing for small projects as a solution, with Co Co finding the idea of working from the banking end to facilitate small projects intriguing. She also highlighted the challenges faced by the elderly in maintaining their properties and accessing care, suggesting the formalization of informal arrangements and the creation of a loan process and legal support. The group agreed on the need for a solution to address these issues, with Fred sharing his experience with adaptive housing for veterans and suggesting the involvement of ? to contribute his expertise.

Affordable Housing and Sustainable Approaches

Art and Terry discussed the difference between creating affordable housing and making housing affordable, emphasizing the latter as a more sustainable approach. They highlighted the challenges in financing and developing affordable properties, particularly the current financialization and development processes. The team also discussed a specific development, Charter House, and its ownership, as well as other nearby housing projects. Lastly, Maya shared her personal experience of having to move to Charter House due to issues with her previous property.

Exploring Solutions for Elderly Homeowners

Co Co proposed various solutions for elderly homeowners, including establishing a land trust or care facility, modifying homes for aging owners, and partnering with Habitat for Humanity to form a volunteer repair crew. The group also discussed the potential of young people assisting with repairs and maintenance, but acknowledged the possible challenges due to property values. Co Co emphasized the importance of raising awareness about these issues, particularly in senior centers, and highlighted the need for more conversation and solutions.

Next meeting: Sept. 26, 2024

Meeting adjourned: 8:30 pm



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