



**City of Portsmouth
Housing Blue Ribbon Committee
MEETING MINUTES
September 11, 2025**

For the Zoom recording: <https://youtu.be/06ffRdgsIH4>

Meeting Called to Order at 5:30 pm.

I. Roll Call

Attending: Councilor John Tabor and Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelley-Adams, co-chairs; Councilor Beth Moreau, John O’Leary, Tracy Kozak (via Zoom), Jennifer Stebbins Thomas, Mary Loane. Absent: Dagan Migirditch, Andrew Samonas, Erik Anderson, Byron Matto, Megan Corsetti. Staff: Planning and Sustainability Dept. Peter Britz, Peter Stith.

As there was no quorum, no votes were taken. The minutes reflect discussion and where noted, consensus.

II. Minutes: August 14, 2025 minutes approval postponed to October 9, 2025 meeting.

III. Chairman’s Remarks and Discussion – This Blue Ribbon Committee will sunset at the end of this Council’s term, so with three committee meetings left (Oct 9, Nov 13 and Dec 11), this is a good opportunity to list accomplishments and consider actions that might be completed before year’s end and recommendations to the City Council for whatever form the Housing Committee might take with the new Council.

a. Accomplishments:

- i. Sherburne School project now in the City Manager’s hands.
- ii. Endorsed Commerce Way as a GNOD
- iii. Created the Housing Trust Fund

b. Items to be addressed in 2025:

- i. Recommend Heritage and Constitution as GNOD
- ii. Consider new RSA 79E allowances to adopt the “Islington Street model” of allowing multiple units in large, older residential buildings. Ask staff to recommend a 79E district that encourages the conversion of historic buildings outside the Historic District for housing with the incentive of the 10 year tax relief for housing that is 30% below market rate.
- iii. Recommend to the Planning Department and Planning Board to move parking requirements into Site Plan Review.

- iv. Recommend that the Planning Department review of 10.812 ordinance to remove the January 1, 1980 date and review the density requirements in SRA and SRB.
- c. Recommendations to the City Council for next MBRC:
 - i. Incorporate consolidation of 6 zones into 3 in the Master Plan process.
 - ii. Follow RKG recommendations on adjusting the incentive program to reflect the insights derived from their research.
 - iii. Put forward the matrix of ideas for the next Housing Committee cycle – to be discussed at the October 9 meeting.

IV. Next meeting October 9 – agenda items

- a. Matrix discussion
- b. Conversation with PHA on Sherburne phasing and assurance that the project as approved is done.

V. Public Comment – Maeve Nolan, Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast commented on several items:

- a. Zoning recommendations make sense – appreciate the consideration of how 79E can increase supply in a manner tailored to Portsmouth. Rep. Al Howland (Durham) will be seeking to expand 79E to include new-builds. Simplifying to make zoning more palatable but still work to be done. When considering coastal buffer areas, be aware of environmental justice precedents that put housing in disadvantageous environments.
- b. Master Plan is an asset for future Housing Committee work. The Committee's final report should be shared with the Master Plan Advisory Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 6:46 pm.

Next meeting: October 9, 2025 at 5:30 pm.