

**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
HOUSING COMMITTEE**



**THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2026, 5:30 pm
City Hall Conference Room A
1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth NH**

Zoom recording: <https://www.youtube.com/live/iUOrqxXQm-s?si=SPtC4a1qtJe1LvP7>

MINUTES

Meeting Called to Order at 5:30 pm.

Roll Call and Welcome

Attending: Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelley, co-chair; Mary Loane, Andrew Samonas, Councilor Beth Moreau, Dagan Migirditch, Erik Anderson, Byron Matto, Angus McDonald, Oliver Chag, Eric Weinrieb. Staff: Planning and Sustainability Dept. Peter Britz, Stefanie Casella, Izak Gilbo.

Members Excused: Councilor John Tabor, Caitlin McGrath-Levesque, Jennifer Stebbins Thomas

1. **Approval of April 23, 2026 minutes** - On a motion by Moreau seconded by Weinrieb, approved by 8 members. Samonas recused (did not attend) and McDonald not yet arrived.
2. **Housing Action Plan Priorities** – The Committee discussed priorities in the 147 Progress Portsmouth recommendations. Anderson asked what the goal of the priorities and Action Plan were to be, that in its previous form the Committee set a goal of adding workforce/below market rate housing units. He added 12 items from the 147 that were not included in the highlighted 10, saying if the goal is to create a toolbox for actions, the priorities needed more definition, specifically referencing the affordability of ‘workforce housing.’ Kelley and Moreau defined the immediate goal as determining the priorities and the responsibilities for implementing those actions to be recommended to the City Council as the Housing Action Plan that would be incorporated into the Master Plan. Peter Stith further explained that the Zoning Audit now underway will also be reflected in the Housing Action Plan and Master Plan.

Moreau, Samonas and Migirditch initiated a discussion of tax relief as an actionable priority but Moreau explained that Portsmouth does not have the municipal authority without new enabling legislation to provide tax relief outside of what is currently defined by RSA 674 (solar, elderly, veterans and disabled). However, creative interpretation of 79E is a path.

Kelley asked each member for their top 3 priorities (including from the original list) to create a finite actionable plan to deliver to the City Council by the July deadline and to then spend the rest of the Committee term working to implement those actions.

Migirditch added that many of the items could be bundled within thematic 'categories, e.g. zoning-related (#77, 78, 79) under the Zoning priority.

Weinreib initiated discussion of what is achievable by the City with Kelley framing those items as what actions are within the City's control – not land costs, construction costs, infrastructure or demand. Weinreib noted facetiously that only by eliminating services (police, fire, DPW, etc.) would the demand dry up. Every place changes and it's untenable to not allow that dynamism.

At the start of the listing of priorities Samonas commented that it didn't make sense to put actions that are completed e.g. the zoning audit and the creation of the Housing Trust Fund or those not recognizing that just 2% of the land in the city is available, as priorities but to focus on how best to use land we have, including nonconforming examples to enable the desired Plan purpose of creating more workforce housing.

Committee member priorities:

Anderson added the following from the original Progress Portsmouth Action Plan:

<https://progress-portsmouth-tools.vercel.app/housing/hap-explorer.html>

- Z15 Outlying neighborhood development – allow housing
- Z12 Affordable – below market rate - housing overlay district
- Z13 Expand manufactured home and modular housing zoning
- Z17 Allow the subdivision of large houses
- Z18 Facilitate room rental and home sharing
- Z19 Make provisions for seasonal worker housing
- P8 Fee structure review
- I1 Tax incentive for ADUs encouraging affordable housing options not market rate
- I2 Affordable housing fee waivers for construction with > 25% under market rate units
- I3 Expedited review of workforce housing projects

Samonas asked that the Housing Action Plan address the needs of key audiences such as those who want to downsize but find no available inventory matching their living needs (older couples who are not seeking subsidized senior living in an apartment building with an elevator.

Samonas and Kelley raised the idea of sharing recommendations that can't fit Portsmouth's Housing Action Plan with surrounding communities who might support more workforce housing if offered new ideas.

Moreau:

- RSA 79 -E tax relief – enact and expedite (4/I4)
- Rezone outdated zoning (9/Z1)
- Implement 'in lieu of' development fee (8/Z10)

Matto:

- RSA 79 -E tax relief – enact and expedite (4/I4)
- Single-family zoning audit (Z33) & Adopt zoning to allow multifamily by-right in single-family zones (10/Z5)

Implement Housing Trust Fund (21/HTF3)

McDonald

- RSA 79 -E tax relief – enact and expedite (4/I4)
- Implement Housing Trust Fund (21/HTF3)
- Update housing resources info on City website (3/EO2)

Chag

RSA 79-E tax relief – enact and expedite (4/14)

Implement Housing Trust Fund (21/HTF3)

Expand multifamily zoning (10/Z5)

Allow for subdivision of large houses (Z17)

Weinreib

Zoning audit implementation so Portsmouth zoning is not so convoluted and contradictory

Implement 'in lieu of' development fee (8/Z10)

Expand multifamily zoning (10/Z5)

Migirditch

Suggest defining the key points and then nesting related line items.

RSA 79 -E tax relief – enact and expedite (4/14)

Implement Housing Trust Fund (21/HTF3)

Ensure Federal zoning accommodations are perpetuated (PA10)

Samonas

Ensure the Housing Action Plan addresses special populations

RSA 79 -E tax relief – enact and expedite (4/14)

Make provisions for cluster development/cottage housing (e.g. Peverly Hill Road project) (7/Z9)

Anderson

Z19 (10) Fee Committee define details

Z13 (28) – Expanded zoning for manufactured homes

Z17 Allow for subdivision of large houses

Kelley

Make provisions for cluster development/cottage housing (e.g. Peverly Hill Road project) (7/Z9)

Adopt zoning to allow multifamily by-right in single-family zones (10/Z5)

Update lot size requirements – implementation of the zoning audit outcomes (12/Z8/)

Loane

Implement zoning audit

RSA 79 -E tax relief – enact and expedite (4/14)

Implement 'in lieu of' development fee (8/Z10)

Implement zoning audit

Stith reported priorities offered by Stebbins-Thomas:

RSA 79 -E tax relief – enact and expedite (4/14)

Allow for subdivision of large houses (Z17)

Rezone outdated zoning (9/Z1)

Stith outlined next steps:

Moving related items into the 79E and Zoning audit buckets.

Using the Zoning Audit and the Housing Action Plan to inform Master Plan

Samonas urged that the RKG, form-based suggestions not be used as the basis.

Ordinances can then be tweaked, or created from scratch (e.g. GNOD)

Committee recognizes that the housing priorities have changed from a more restrictive 1970s to answering current needs and what can be done to improve the process (maybe by reviewing the spreadsheet of variances granted to identify commonalities/trends?)

Stith confirmed with the Committee that meeting will be scheduled for the second Thursday of the month at 5:30.

3. **Public Comment – none.**

Adjourned at 7 pm.

Next meeting: Thursday, June 11, 2026

DRAFT