

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
MEETING OF THE SELECTBOARD
MINUTES

Date: September 12, 2023
Time: 8:30 AM
Place: Via Zoom Meeting & Town Hall
Egremont

Present at the meeting in person were Selectboard Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie.

Also present were Richard Stanley - 8:30am, Judith Goodman - 9:00am, Richard Allen - 9:30am, Betsy Sharkey - 10:00am, Doug Mishkin - 10:30am.

Present via zoom was Mary McGurn.

The meeting was audio and video recorded.

The purpose of the meeting was to interview parties interested in serving on the Municipal Housing Trust Board.

The Board interviewed Richard Stanley, Judith Goodman, Richard Allen, Betsy Sharkey and Doug Mishkin and will interview Bob Noonan on September 19 at 10:00am.

Richard Stanley is a member of the Community Development Corporation (CDC) of South Berkshire, which funds through private donations, grants and mortgages the construction of low-income and affordable housing. Mr. Stanley feels that one reason for the lack of such housing in Egremont is the lack of necessary utilities such as water and sewer increases the cost of a project for a developer. He feels there is no conflict with his service on the CDC and his knowledge of how to fund projects would be beneficial to Egremont. Mr. Stanley supports affordable rental units.

Judith Goodman, currently co-Chair of the Egremont Housing Committee, essentially withdrew her name as she feels her knowledge and expertise would be most effective on the Committee in establishing policy and serving as an outreach advisory Committee to the Trust Board.

Richard Allen has been unsuccessfully trying to get housing in Egremont for 25 years. He feels that inexpensive housing is needed for more than the workforce. One issue is that lack of near by necessities such as grocery stores and of transportation. He thinks Egremont should think small with fewer units than most developers are willing to consider. He also feels that the Town's Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU's) bylaw needs to be amended to give more opportunities for ADU's and that the Trust could possibly help residents with the ADU process. He thinks that repurposing current un-used or under-used structures is a more viable option for housing than building new to start with. Tax incentives and other such incentives could be considered for developers on large tracts of land to include affordable housing. He supports rental housing over ownerships and feels the Town can contract with an organization to administer the housing units.

Betsy Sharkey is very aware of the need for local workers as she had difficulty finding contractors to make repairs on her home and the ones she did find have to drive from a distance. She agreed she was likely the least qualified but she has an opinion and a willingness to help. She loves the sense of community in Egremont. It was suggested she may be a perfect fit for some other town boards/committees that currently have vacancies.

Doug Mishkin, currently co-Chair of the Egremont Housing Committee, said he was not qualified for the Trust Board. He would like to continue to advocate for housing in his role on the Committee forming policy and actively collaborating with the Trust Board. His professional expertise is legal counsel for tenants with housing disputes. He knows all the organizations that have anything to do with housing and housing issues. He feels strongly that Egremont needs rental workforce housing.

The Board will no longer accept letters of interest after Friday, September 15.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55am

Mary Brazie,
Office Administrator

minutes.24/septe12

*The recording of the minutes is posted on the Town's web page at www.egremont-ma.gov for 90 days.
Any attachments noted are on file at Town Hall.*