



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH

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Deaglan McEachern
Mayor
May 1, 2024

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Rye Town Hall
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Ladies and Gentlemen:

The purpose of this letter is to initiate a discussion about what each of our SAU 52 communities are doing to address workforce housing and to work collectively to identify properties that would be suitable for workforce housing developments.

As background, I would like to update you on exciting progress relative to workforce housing that have taken place in the City of Portsmouth over the last several months:

- In February 2024, the City Council established a Housing Blue Ribbon Committee with the appointment of 11 members comprised of the Assistant Mayor, two City Councilors and eight citizens of various backgrounds. This Committee's stated mission is to expand the housing supply, especially affordable units in the City of Portsmouth.

- The Places to Live Study Circle Dialogue served as an outreach and engagement effort with Portsmouth citizens and businesses to address and assess the City's housing challenges, and to create succinct goals and actions to address these challenges, specifically related to workforce and affordable housing concerns. This engagement effort included a Joint Listening Session with the City Council and Planning Board in February 2024
- In April 2024, the newly formed Housing Blue Ribbon Committee recommended that the City Council work towards the official disposition and land lease of the Sherburne school property for the creation of permanent workforce / affordable housing.
- The City has recently amended its Zoning Ordinance to create density bonus incentives for workforce housing and to expand the Gateway zoning district that will provide greater housing development opportunities.
- The Portsmouth Housing Authority and the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire recently announced their partnership for a housing development project that includes workforce housing on church-owned land.
- Through the InvestNH initiative, the City supports a Housing Navigator position in our Planning & Sustainability Department to coordinate housing-related matters within the City, with adjoining communities, and at the State level.
- The City actively participates in the Rockingham Regional Planning Commission monthly meetings with City Councilor Beth Moreau and other City staff members, to maintain coordination with municipalities on housing and other related matters.

I plan to report back to our City Council on our collective communities' efforts regarding workforce housing at the May 20, 2024 City Council meeting and would ask to hear back from you by May 17, 2024 to be included in this report back.

In addition, I want to advise each of you that during review of the enabling legislation for the creation of housing authorities, Portsmouth Housing Authority's area of operation is not limited to Portsmouth but extends six miles from the City's border, which includes all SAU members that do not have a housing authority. PHA's housing developments are funded through loan tax credits administered by the NH Housing Finance Authority. Preliminary applications are due in June and final applications are due by August 30, 2024. Please feel free to reach out to Craig Welch, Executive Director of PHA directly with any question you may have regarding these resources.

"Alone, we can do so little, together we can do so much." Helen Keller.

Look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,


Deaglan McEachern, Mayor
City of Portsmouth