

Meeting Notes:

Small Town Housing Working Group

November 30, 2021, 5:00-6:30pm, online

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, March 15, 5:30 PM

Contact: Jen Audley, jaudley@frcog.org (413)774-3167 (ext. 126)

11.30.21 Agenda: [https://frcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/STHWG Meeting Agenda 11-30-2021.pdf](https://frcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/STHWG_Meeting_Agenda_11-30-2021.pdf)

Attending: Alyssa Larose (FRCOG), Barbara Carulli (Leverett Affordable Housing Trust), David Greenberg (Colrain and Franklin County Continuing the Political Revolution (FCCPR)), Marybeth Chichester (Colrain Planning Board), Mary McClintock (Community Action and Conway), Brian McHugh (FCRHRA), Megan McDonough (Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity), Jerry Lund (Boards of CHCFC and FRPB (of FRCOG), CABs of HCS-MA (Franklin rep.) and HCRC, parent w/ daughter struggling w/ OUD, OTF activist), Lily Linke (CHAPA), MJ Adams (Greenfield), Andrew Baker (Shelburne), Katy Lacy (MA Housing Partnership), Mike Shaffer (Erving Planning Board), Alec Wade (Orange Planner), Zoe Garcia (intern w/ Senator Comerford), Geoff Kravitz (Sunderland Town Administrator), Hannah Davis (Whatley Asst Town Administrator and Economic Development Director), Walter Ramsey (Montague Planner), Lili Dwight (Deerfield ad hoc committee on Senior Housing) Jen Audley (FRCOG and Montague), notetaker

Presenters: Lily Linke (CHAPA), Alyssa Larose (FRCOG – but as of Dec 2021, FCRHRA – see below!)

Housing News, Announcements, and Community Updates

Hannah Davis – she is Whately's new Community Development Administrator and Assistant Town Administrator. Whately is bringing its Housing Committee back and she is looking for resources. communitydevelopment@whately.org

Jerry Lund – is involved with an emerging effort to delay demolition of the Farren Care Center building in Montague. The building is owned by Trinity Healthcare, and was most recently used as a residential nursing facility with about 100 beds. (Residents were transferred to a different facility earlier this year.) Trinity agreed to do a repurposing study and that hasn't happened. Instead, a Trinity representative recently appeared at a Montague Selectboard meeting and explained that their investigations had led them to recommend demolition, which they hoped to commence in December and complete by June 2022. Walter Ramsey noted that the agreement was that Trinity would provide a redevelopment study for the site, not assuming re-use or renovation of the buildings. jslundco@earthlink.net

Alyssa Larose – Starting a new job in December as director of housing development at Rural Development, Inc, (RDI), the non-profit development arm of the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority. This is great news for the region, although it means the FRCOG is losing a senior planner and the planner of staff with the most expertise on housing policy, planning and production at the municipal level. She will continue to be involved with this group and will co-facilitate for a while with the person who replaces her at the FRCOG. Jen Audley – jaudley@frcog.org - will handle Small Town housing Working Group coordination (scheduling, communication, maintaining the email list, etc.) until the new person is ready to take that on. Alyssa’s new email address: alarose@fchhra.org

Job Description for Senior Land Use and Housing Planner at FRCOG: <https://frcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Senior-Land-Use-Housing-Planner.pdf> Letters of interest and resumes to Kimberly Noake MacPhee, Land Use & Natural Resources Program Manager, Franklin Regional Council of Governments, 12 Olive Street, Greenfield, MA 01301 no later than January 18, 2021. More details on this and other employment opportunities here: <https://frcog.org/about/employment/>

Brian McHugh – RDI’s senior housing construction project on Main St in Sunderland is on schedule for lottery in June, opening in August. bmchugh@fchhra.org

Lili Dwight – Deerfield has established a sort of “meta committee” to work on vision for downtown. She is committed to ensuring that subsidized senior housing is included in that vision. Interested in working with/learning from Sunderland, use of ARPA funds. ldwight.SrHousing@deerfield.life

Presentation on CHAPA’s Municipal Engagement Initiative

Lily Linke, Municipal Engagement Program Associate, Citizens’ Housing and Planning Association llinke@chapa.org

Slides: <https://frcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/CHAPA-MEI-for-STHWG-113021.pdf>

CHAPA’s Municipal Engagement Initiative (MEI) program aims to build local support for housing initiatives. The program was inspired by research from the Housing Politics Lab - <https://www.housingpolitics.com/> - showing that local participation in housing-related efforts is unrepresentative and tends to favor delaying or stopping affordable housing development. MEI encourages the formation of community-based coalitions that can mobilize to advocate for housing development efforts through education, combatting myths, and public participation. <https://www.chapa.org/about/chapa-programs/municipal-engagement-initiative>

CHAPA’s MEI work to date has mostly been with communities in the eastern part of MA, but funding from the Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds is supporting expansion, including efforts in Franklin County that started in 2021 with a [regional meeting](#) and new

coalitions launching in Erving, Montague, and Greenfield. The basic concept is to bring together a core group of residents who are “in it for the long haul” and willing/able to take a broad-based, big tent approach. In prior MEI communities, which have been larger, these core groups are typically +/-20 people, with a broader circle of 80-100 interested folks who stay informed but don’t come to meeting regularly.

CHAPA has an application process for communities interested in joining the MEI program; the deadline for being in the 2022 cohort has passed, but there may be opportunities for additional Franklin County towns to launch coalitions using the MEI model under the auspices of the Improving Housing to Improve Health project. <https://frcog.org/chip/ih2/>

Ways to engage/learn more:

Meet w/ Lily Linke during her [Office Hours](#). (Follow the link to see available times and dates and schedule online.) Every week on Wednesday afternoon and Friday morning, or by appointment - email lilinke@chapa.org

Greenfield’s MEI coalition is called Housing Greenfield. This group has met a few times and is off to a strong start thanks to the foundation provided by the Greening Greenfield/Franklin County CPR “Housing is a Human Right” series this past spring. It is open to all; next meeting is online Jan 6, 6-7:30pm. Susan Worgaftik is the contact: suworg1@gmail.com Several people attending the meeting are involved with this group already, including Mary McClintock, Alyssa Larose, MJ Adams, and Jen Audley

Montague’s MEI coalition is in early stages of formation; CHAPA to continue to provide facilitation as it comes together. Next meeting will likely be online, 2nd week in January. Contact Walter Ramsey – planner@montague-ma.gov - or Jen Audley for more info.

Erving had a successful launch event but hasn’t met again. Lily remains hopeful that a coalition will coalesce in this community. Planner Mariah Kurtz is the contact for now.

STHWG members are welcome to join these meetings for housing advocates from throughout MA:

Affordable Housing 101 Sessions every other month on the third Tuesday, 6:30 to 8pm Best choice for beginners

Next meeting: Tuesday January 18th Contact Lily or Dana LeWinter at dlewinter@chapa.org

[Making the Case Working Group](#) - monthly on the second Monday, 12 to 1:30pm. Best for people who have some prior knowledge and are already involved with housing initiatives.

Next meeting: Monday Jan 10th (Link above goes to registration page.)

Confronting the History of Housing Discrimination series

Official announcement and Zoom link coming soon! First meeting will be in late January and this will run every other month, alternating with Affordable Housing 101. Contact Lily for more info.

Other Resources from Lily:

[MEI Toolkit](#)

[DataTown](#)

[Housing Toolbox](#)

[TheCaseMade](#)

[Advocating for Local ARPA Funds](#)

[Metro Mayors Coalition Regional Housing Task Force](#)

[Local Housing Solutions](#)

Energy Efficiency and Clean Energy Resources for Low-Moderate Income Residents & Landlords in Franklin County

Alyssa Larose, FRCOG

The FRCOG has compiled and organized information about programs that can help make clean energy more affordable for **residential customers** in Massachusetts. For information regarding offerings, eligibility requirements, and the first step to take go here: frcog.org/clean.energy

Contact is Allison Gage at 413-774-3167 x136 or cleanenergy@frcog.org

Of particular note is Community Action's Clean Energy Consulting program, <https://frcog.org/capv-energyconsult/> which offers assistance to homeowners, landlords or renters in Franklin County, about how to best utilize Mass Save Programs, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center rebates, and discuss clean energy options for your home. [Here is a flier with more information.](#)

STHWG Meeting Schedule for 2022

Those in attendance favored continuing to meet quarterly (March, June, Sept, Dec) and agreed to shift the meeting start time to 5:30PM. Polling of the group for the March meeting date resulted in a decision to schedule the next meeting for **Tuesday, March 15, 5:30-7:00**. More details to come and to be posted on the calendar at frcog.org/events— please send agenda requests to Jen Audley for now and she will pass them along to facilitators.