

Planning & Sustainability - City of Northampton

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Housing Partnership 5:30 PM, Monday February 2, 2026

Members

Bev Bates, Chair	X	Gordon Shaw	X	
Hannah Shaffer, Vice-Chair	X	Ben Wood	X	
Richard Abuza	X	Chris Bryson,	X	
Councilor Gwen Nabad	X			Staff: Keith Benoit X

1. Notice that this meeting is being recorded
2. Roll Call was taken and quorum was obtained. No public's comments.
3. Hannah Shaffer was nominated for Vice Chair by Gwen Nabad and seconded by Richard Abuza. Roll call was taken.
4. Approve Minutes from January 5, 2026 noting to add Chris and Change date. Motioned by Richard Abuza and seconded by Councilor Gwen Nabad.
5. Discussion with Laura Baker from Valley CDC on market trends for affordable rental and homeownership housing. Bev Bates served on the real estate committee for Valley CDC and thought some of data from the recent lottery were pertinent to the partnership. Laura Baker talked about the lottery for 23 Laurel St. (former state hospital) and there were 2,400 + application, which is unusually high for 20 units of one- two- and three-bedroom households. A true lottery! They marketed the application very well and had a very short application. There was a large demand for one-person household (1,090) and then two-person households (585), three-person at 388 applications. Most of the applications come from Hampshire and Hampden counties, with some from Berkshire and Franklin counties. There were apartments set asides for people who are unhoused and 47% of all applicants reported being unhoused. All of the units are priced at 30 or 60% of Area Median Income (AMI). Half of the parking spaces are empty and only 20 were built (one for each unit).



6. For the Prospect Place development of 60 family apartments, which also included studio apartments. There were over 4,000 applications for these 60 units. The location is very accessible to schools, shopping, PVRTA, and rail trail. There were over 450 people requesting an accessible units. Of the people who were homeless, there were preferences based on why people became homeless. Spanish was the most common language that needed documents translated. There will be a part-time service coordinator for people who need access to services. Residents will start moving in by the end of February.
7. Both projects did not require local preferences. Both developments are fossil-fuel free, with PV panels, with Prospect Place having geothermal. But the electricity cost is increasing and the grid is becoming increasingly unreliable. Valley CDC tries really hard to pay the electricity for the units. Prospect Place was one of the first multi-family units in the state to do geothermal and was able to fundraise a lot of money to pay for it. Others doing big geothermal projects are at colleges and cities, who usually have deeper pockets.
8. Housing Partnership Priorities for 2026, still early in the year to determine what people are interested in focusing on. Bev Bates asked if Carolyn Misch will be interested in coming to talk about City priorities. Hannah Shaffer said that the small-projects such as the resource brochure, grants from trash removal, and winterizing kits for residents could be used for helping with cold weatherization. Ben Wood said it would be useful for Director Misch to hear from the City and commented that ADU's at a scale within the City. Councilor Gwen Nabad mentioned that housing trust funds have been coming up a lot in the fellowship she is participating in. What can the Northampton Housing Authority do to increase housing sufficiency.
9. Hannah Shaffer gave a brief update on the Resource Brochure, which is nearly complete. The partnership discussed final feedback on the draft. Where can they go online or can they be printed and sent to various services agencies.
10. Keith Benoit gave a brief membership update, there are three vacancies and the Mayor was working with a new City Council, which is just getting settled into their appointments.
11. Project Update: Evergreen Rd. sewer connection is moving forward and Meadowbrook rehabilitation is not moving forward. The 27 Crafts Ave geothermal project, maybe in succession with the City. The project at 33 King St. by Valley CDC is collaborating with The Community Builders on the design and permitting soon.

12. The meeting adjourned at 6:40 motioned by Gwen and seconded by Ben Wood.