



**Town of New Fairfield
4 Brush Hill Road
New Fairfield, Connecticut**



**HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, November 1, 2022**

Members present: Anita Brown, Chairwoman
Kathleen DiTullio, Vice Chairwoman
Jim Mandella
Liz Yoho
Kathy Hull
Roberta Anderson

Members absent: Rich Kalinka

Ex-Officio: Selectwoman Khris Hall

Ex-Officio absent: Tom Kavaliauskas, Zoning
Cory Neumann, Planning

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 pm by Chairwoman Brown. The pledge of allegiance immediately followed.

Correspondence and Announcements

There were none.

Minutes – Special Meeting October 25 2022

Ms. Brown moved to approve the October 25, 2022 Special Meeting Minutes, seconded by Ms. Hull.

Ms. Brown noted one change that Glen Chaudry only consulted on the Ridgefield plan.

The motion with the edit passed unanimously.

Ms. Brown moved to suspend the rules to add the approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 6, 2022 to the agenda, seconded by Ms. Anderson and passed unanimously.

New Business

Consultation Proposal discussion/questions: Director LCHO

Ms. Brown introduced Jocelyn Ayer from the Litchfield County Center for Housing Opportunities.

Ms. Brown thanked Ms. Ayer for coming this evening to answer questions about the proposal submitted. She asked about how emails would be gathered to conduct a survey.

Ms. Ayer thanked the committee for giving her the opportunity to present this evening and noted she has worked with 16 communities in Litchfield County in developing and implementing their housing plans. Ms. Ayer responded to the email question and said the plan should be outreach in as many different ways as possible. She said Roxbury made paper copies available in the Town Hall, library, senior center and sent them online through the Selectman's e-newsletter. Other Towns have also utilized Parks and Recreation e-newsletters, senior center e-newsletters or library e-newsletters.

Ms. Brown asked if there was any concern with a person repeating survey answers and Ms. Ayer said most people do not want to fill out multiple surveys but even if a few did there would not be a big impact.

Ms. Brown asked how the Committee could make sure to get renters so that they can get diverse coverage. Ms. Ayer said a question on the survey could be do you own or rent. There could be demographic questions at the end of the survey. The questions asked should be about perceptions as in "do you feel like there is a lack of housing." Survey Monkey surveys are easy to create and deploy and so two or three surveys could be sent while working on the plan. If the Committee decides to do a Zoom forum, Zoom has a polling feature. She said a postcard could be sent to residents to make them aware a survey is available and the postcard could also have a QR code to the survey link.

Mr. Mandella asked how people could be informed the survey is online and Ms. Ayer said besides putting the link in e-newsletters social media posts could be used to inform people.

Ms. Hall asked if Ms. Ayer had worked with churches to get surveys out and Ms. Ayer said they worked informally with churches but every member of the Committee can get the word out to members of groups they are involved in such as Lions Clubs, the fire departments, etc. She said it is important to get the word out to members of the community.

Ms. Brown asked if a community conversation should be held prior to the survey and Ms. Ayer said Roxbury did their survey first and then held a community forum to discuss what they heard from the survey. She said if the Committee chose to send the postcard to inform people of the survey they could offer three options to residents – click on the survey link or an in person forum or a Zoom forum. Ms. Brown asked how many forums should be held and Ms. Ayer said during the writing and adoption phase the Committee could do the survey, hold a forum either Zoom or in person to give survey results. Then the Committee could set goals and strategies before holding another forum to discuss that phase and have a Q&A session. A third forum could be held once the plan is drafted prior to it being present to the Board of Selectmen or Planning and Zoning.

Ms. Brown noted the Zoning Commission is planning on rewriting some regulations and the Planning Commission is working on the Plan of Conservation and Development. She asked how closely Ms. Ayer worked with those commissions. Ms. Ayer said the Committees have had members from Planning and Zoning so they can report back to their members. She noted she is a land use planner by profession.

Ms. Brown said the Committee would probably break this process down into the survey and community forums and then possibly move into a phase II. Ms. Ayer said she would bill by the hour for technical assistance which would cost \$100 per hour.

Ms. Brown asked if the Committee was ready to vote on asking for the money to help with the survey and community forum assistance. Ms. DiTullio said she had reached out to a couple of the communities Ms. Ayer had worked with and they spoke glowingly of her and the job she did.

Ms. Hall said the tasks the Committee is looking for are outlined in the proposal and the price tag seems very reasonable. She said the Committee could look at other firms but many are very big and Ms. Ayer would probably offer hands on service where other larger firms might not.

Ms. Brown moved to request \$7,000 from the Board of Selectmen to enlist the consultation services of Jocelyn Ayer to initiate the Housing Opportunity Committee's efforts for surveys and community forums, seconded by Ms. Anderson and passed unanimously.

Talking points for budget request/letter

Ms. Hall said she had given First Selectwoman DelMonaco heads up that this proposal would be coming forward. She asked Ms. Brown to write the letter but then to hold it until Ms. Hall can discuss further with Ms. DelMonaco.

Consideration of other proposals

Discussed already during the presentation discussion.

Old Business

2022-23 Budget: Timeline and Requests

Ms. Brown asked what the protocol was regarding the budget request and Ms. Hall said the Finance Director will be sending a packet to organizations probably end of November or early December to fill out the departments needs for next fiscal year. She said the Committee should have a dollar figure for the recording secretary, dollars for any anticipated consulting follow up services, supplies such as postage, etc. She said the Board of Selectmen will start meeting the second week of January to listen to all the requests and then will send a budget suggestion to the Board of Finance on the first Saturday of March. A referendum is held usually in May. She said the Housing Opportunities Committee after the survey and community forums may want to wait to see what Zoning and Planning have to say as they start their processes. The Committee has four and a half years to rewrite the plan for housing.

Reports from Working Subcommittees

i. Communication

Ms. Hull said they will be working on again in the near future.

ii. ADU's

Nothing at this time.

iii. Liaisons: Zoning and Planning

Ms. Anderson said she had spoken to Mr. Neumann and had emailed the letter sent to Zoning so he could get an understanding of what the Committee was asking of him.

Board Comments

Ms. Brown said she sent out the summit information provided by Ms. Ayer's organization on community engagement on land use, rehabbing houses, etc. She encouraged members to listen to them.

Public Comments

There were none.

Adjournment

Ms. DiTullio moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 pm, seconded by Ms. Yoho and passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:



Recording Secretary

Received by email on 11/03/2022 @ 12:08 p.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield