



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



**HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, May 2, 2023**

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

Members absent: Jim Mandella
Ex-Officio: Tom Kavaliauskas, Zoning
Ex-Officio absent: Selectwoman Khris Hall
Cory Neumann, Planning

Also Present: Jocelyn Ayer, Consultant

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 pm by Chairwoman Brown. The pledge of allegiance immediately followed.

Correspondence and Announcements

Ms. Brown said an email had come through the housing@newfairfield.org email about housing affordability and Ms. Brown said she will communicate with the person who emailed.

Approval of Minutes from April meeting

Ms. DiTullio moved to approve the April 4, 2023 Meeting Minutes, seconded by Ms. Hull and passed unanimously.

New Business

Discuss and detail presentation plans for May 8 and 9 Information Forum

Ms. Brown said the community forums will be held May 8th at the Senior Center at noon and May 9th virtually.

Ms. Ayer went over the presentation for feedback and discussion. She said Khris Hall will welcome all on behalf of the Town and Ms. Brown will explain the topics to be covered.

The presentation will also include:

- who is on the committee;
- a value statement;
- why the Town is working on an affordable housing plan;

- frequently asked questions;
- what is in the towns plan including needs and goals/strategies;
- the State's definition of affordable housing;
- the current state of dedicated affordable housing in Town - 66 total units dedicated to remain affordable housing;
- a slide on the households burdened by the cost of home ownership;
- housing life cycle;
- limited housing option types in Town;
- challenges to home ownership;
- what affordable housing looks like now;
- the Town survey results;
- and, next steps in the housing plan process.

Ms. DiTullio suggested that the slide with housing costs be more specific as to what is in the housing costs number – mortgage/rent, property taxes, etc.

Ms. DiTullio also noted some of the deed restricted housing that received funding in the past will be sunsetting so some of those units may no longer need to remain affordable.

Ms. Yoho said when she attended the Planning Commission meeting she was surprised that some members did not have an understanding of the definition of affordable housing. Ms. Ayer said that is not uncommon, she said volunteers often don't have a good understanding of the state's definition. Ms. Yoho said the Planning Commission seemed to think that New Fairfield was closer to the required percentages than they are and felt this could be a contentious issue down the road. Ms. Ayer said the state's list contains dedicated affordable housing units that are monitored such that income eligible households get access to those units.

Ms. Ayer said the Committee needs to think about ways to create other options in the housing life cycle. Ms. Yoho said the community could engage with Housatonic Habitat to find properties for them to use or to buy such that the Town is not building the housing. She also said other non profits should be invited into the community to create affordable housing. Ms. Ayer said non profits could qualify for state and federal grants.

Ms. Ayer asked if any members of the Committee wanted to present the survey results and the value statement – Mr. Kalinka said he would present the survey results and Ms. DiTullio said she would present the value statement. Ms. Brown asked Ms. Yoho to speak to the needs in the community.

Outreach Push for Forum Attendance

Ms. Brown said she had written a letter to the editor to the Town Tribune which they made into an article. She also asked them about placing the forum flyer into the Tribune for this week and the cost would be \$138.

Ms. Brown moved to spend up to \$138 to place the forum flyer in the Town Tribune this week with the funds to come from the budget surplus, seconded by Mr. Kalinka.

Ms. Hull asked if this would come out of this budget and Ms. Brown said it is surplus funds. Ms. Hull asked if there was more in next year's budget for this type of expense and Ms. Brown answered there was. Ms. DiTullio said this is money well spent.

The motion passed unanimously.

Sip n Stroll

Ms. Brown said she will be out of town and taking the red eye back on May 20th so she suggested the Committee pass on this for this year. She suggested a sandwich board be put up for the survey maybe near Town Hall. She also suggested the Committee could do something for the July 4th parade and New Fairfield Day on September 9th.

Old Business

Board Comments

There were none.

Public Comments

There were none

Adjournment

Ms. Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 pm, seconded by Mr. Kalinka and passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:



Recording Secretary

Received by email on 05/04/2023 @ 1:33 p.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield