



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



**HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, June 6, 2023**

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

Members absent: Roberta Anderson

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 the Housing Opportunities Committee has its own email housing@newfairfield.org. They have received two applications of interest for housing, some emails from people who attended the forum, and an inquiry about the sale of parcels.

She noted there was also a nice article in the Town Tribune on May 18th about getting the word out for the survey and forums.

Approval of Minutes from April meeting

Ms. DiTullio moved to approve the May 2, 2023 Meeting Minutes, seconded by Ms. Yoho and passed unanimously.

New Business

Reflect/Process May Forum Takeaways

Ms. Brown said the survey had been completed by 426 respondents and she was asking if they thought it should be closed by the end of June.

Ms. Ayer said as of today there were 434 respondents and the committee's target was 356. She said the survey were closed they probably would not get too many more responses anyway. She suggested that the Committee may choose to do another survey later on. Ms. Yoho asked if there was a broader range of demographics in the respondents and Ms. Ayer said the curve of the respondents reflects the population of New Fairfield.

It was agreed this survey would end by the end of June.

Ms. DiTullio said the Committee did a good job of getting the word out about the forums. Ms. Hill said that based on some comments she heard from some people the Committee still has a lot of work to do.

Ms. Brown suggested more small group meetings should be held with Lions Club members and churches.

Mr. Kalinka said he felt people who attended the forum at the senior center were interested in talking further after the forum.

Ms. Yoho said she was pleasantly surprised about the number of attendees at the senior center forum. Ms. Ayer agreed and said the engagement was great. She said this is a continuing conversation and the community needs to be engaged about housing options.

Ms. Yoho said they still need to offer the Zoom option and Ms. Ayer agreed so that the Committee is not accused of offering meetings at times when people can't make them.

Mr. Kalinka asked if there was any way to track if people were watching the zoom meeting afterwards and Ms. Brown said she would look into that.

Ms. Brown was asking if the Committee could be involved in the July 4th parade and Mr. Mandela said they could match but it would not be an opportunity for a forum necessarily. Ms. Brown said the presence would be good. Ms. Yoho said participating in New Fairfield Day might be more valuable.

Ms. DiTullio noted the Economic Development Commission purchased a banner not too long ago to take to various events and the Housing Opportunities Committee should look into that.

Introduce and discuss draft Table of Contents

Ms. Ayer introduced what might be part of the housing plan table of contents. The intro could include why the plan was created, how affordability is defined, why housing is unaffordable and how this plan was developed.

The next part might be the assessment of housing needs and current housing stock which would include what residents said about the housing needs, demographics and trends, and regional housing needs.

Land use and zoning assessments should be part of the plan which will discuss what residential uses zoning allows and protected land.

Goals and strategies could include how New Fairfield can address the housing needs.

There would also be an appendix and resources section with the survey results as well as the link to the video of what affordable housing can look like.

Ms. Ayer said the strategies section could include a discussion of zoning regulations that impacts affordable housing including regulations that other communities have that help with affordable housing - such as multi family zoning, accessory apartments without a special permitting process, and two family housing for instance.

Ms. Ayer said the affordable housing units in New Fairfield per the State is 85 versus the 424 which would be the 10% as suggested by the state. She noted the only residential units permitted in Town without a special permit is single family homes and boarding homes for three or less unrelated occupants. She said accessory apartments and turning bigger homes into more than one unit could be options. Building more two family houses are not allowed except for seniors and one specific zoning district in town.

Some towns allow the creation of affordable housing by non profits and allow mixed use in commercial districts.

Ms. Ayer said it is not uncommon for Zoning Commissions to require special permits but asked what really requires that type of level of control.

Ms. Ayer's stream disconnected at 8:19 pm.

Introduce and begin discussion of draft Goals and Strategies

Ms. Brown said the suggested goals are to support the New Fairfield Housing Trust, support first time homebuyer options, allow the development of smaller size homes to allow for downsizing options for seniors, for instance, increase awareness about the Housing Opportunities work, continue to raise awareness of housing solutions, and make sure the strategies in the adopted housing plan are implemented over five years.

Ms. Ayer was able to reconnect at 8:25 pm.

Ms. Ayer spoke about establishing a unit goal over creating 20 units of affordable housing over five years. She suggested the idea of creating a goal and a number such as 20 is to assuage concerns that the plan is to increase affordable housing such that it changes the community.

Address annual report to BOS/ZC/PC as stated in Annex

Ms. Brown said she would have to check with Khris Hall about whether a report is needed at this point given that they recently presented to the Board.

Apprise of Invoice for Consultant Services

Ms. Brown said the chair typically signs off on the invoices but she wanted to let the Committee members know the first invoice for consulting services for Ms. Ayer has been submitted.

Old Business

Board Comments

Ms. Hull read a statement from the CT Insider that David Goldenberg, the chair of the Ridgefield Affordable Housing Committee has resigned to spend time traveling.

Public Comments

There were none

Adjournment

Ms. Hull moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 pm, seconded by Ms. DiTullio and passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:



Recording Secretary

Received by email on 06/08/2023 @ 11:20 a.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield