



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



**HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, August 1, 2023**

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

Ex-Officio: Tom Kavaliauskas, Zoning
Selectwoman Khris Hall

Ex-Officio absent: Cory Neumann, Planning

Also Present: Jocelyn Ayer, Consultant

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 pm by Chairwoman Brown. The pledge of allegiance immediately followed.

Correspondence and Announcements

Ms. Brown said Mark Choury from Union Savings Bank Commercial Lending reached out regarding any affordable housing needs. She told him the group is in the process of gathering data and drafting the plan.

Approval of Minutes from July meeting

Mr. Mandella moved to approve the minutes of July 11, 2023, seconded by Ms. Anderson and passed unanimously.

New Business

Briefing of Annual Report Presentations to Planning/BOS; Zoning upcoming 8/2

Ms. Brown said she and Ms. Ayer made a presentation to the Planning Commission and to the Board of Selectmen. They felt they were well received. The Zoning Commission is next on the docket.

Ms. Ayer said this is a good time to present as the Planning Commission is working on the Plan of Conservation and Development update. She said hopefully the POCD will reference the housing plan.

Ms. Hall noted the Planning Commission has released a survey for the POCD work and there are some questions on housing. She thought it would be a good idea for housing committee members to take the survey.

Expansion/Discussion of Draft Housing Plan Goals/Strategies Details

Ms. Ayer went through the document explaining each section as per the table of contents. The introduction will explain why this plan is being written, who is on the committee, and how affordability is defined.

There will be a chart of the area median income for different household sizes and incomes that qualify for affordable housing in New Fairfield. There will also be the states list of what dedicated affordable housing means. There will be a timeline so the public can give input along the way. The overarching goal of creating 20 affordable housing units over the next five years.

Other sections will include frequently asked questions, assessment of current housing needs with a summary of the survey results and demographic trends.

WestCOG has a regional affordable housing toolbox with data and information on what other regional towns are doing as the State likes to see the regional housing needs in these plans.

A discussion of Land use and Zoning will be in the plan as well as a description of the Affordable Housing appeals act - 8-30g.

The plan will also include a map showing areas of town that are protected from development including housing. Planometrics who is the Planning Commission consultant on the POCD will provide the map.

The goals and strategies section will have a definition of affordable housing, examples of what Housing Trusts can do, a page on how affordable housing gets built with a timeline and money sources, and a plan to create awareness around the issue and potential solutions.

The final goal will be the implementation of the housing plan including what New Fairfield residents can do to help.

Ms. Brown suggested a couple of committee members might want to get together and go over the plan to give feedback. She asked all to give feedback by 8/21.

Ms. Hall said the financing of an affordable housing unit may be difficult now with the rising interest rates. Ms. Ayer said the State has a fair amount of funding available for a housing non profit with a site controlled project.

Ms. DiTullio said she read that some affordable housing projects are steering away from government funding. Ms. Ayer said that may be for larger scale projects but smaller projects should still use the programs available through the state.

Ms. Brown discussed the tentative dates for the rollout of the plan: review the plan by 8/21 with final edits to Ms. Ayer for draft approval at the September meeting; the plan will then have to be posted on the Town website for at least 35 days for public review; after that a draft will be sent to

Planning, Zoning and the Board of Selectmen; a request will be sent to get on those groups agendas for presentation. After the plan is presented to those groups an in person and remote forum will be held. The plan will be presented to the Board of Selectmen for final approval perhaps by October.

Ms. Hall suggested the Committee hold off presenting the final draft until after the election season so it doesn't get caught up in any political fighting that might happen. She noted there is no deadline driving this before Thanksgiving.

Ms. Yoho asked about the 35 day review period and Ms. Ayer said it is a statutory requirement. The review period has to be at least 35 days but could be more. Ms. Yoho felt it would be better to have a longer process for feedback.

Mr. Kalinka said a draft copy could be at the booth for New Fairfield Day. He said he would rather talk about the time frame at the next meeting.

Ms. Brown said Ms. Ayer could create a one page summary to hand out for New Fairfield Day rather than the full 28 page document. Ms. Ayer suggested two sign up sheets - one for people who might want to see the plan when completed and one for people who might be interested in working with the Housing Trust for instance.

Ms. Ayer said the best place to get feedback is through the community forums.

Mr. Mandella asked how long it will take for the zoning regulation rewrites and Mr. Kavalinkas said it is a long process and will take at least a year.

Ms. Brown said the committee could invite someone from the Planning Commission to attend New Fairfield Day to get residents to complete their survey for the POCD.

Ms. Ayer asked if there were pictures available for the front cover of the plan and Mr. Kalinka said he still has the photos he's taken of various affordable housing projects.

Tentative Plans for New Fairfield Day Booth (9/9/2023)/Banner

Ms. Hull suggested the committee could make a Photo Booth for the New Fairfield Day event and people can take a picture in the booth.

Ms. Brown said the event is September 9th with a rain date of September 10th and help would be needed to set up and break down as well as during the day.

Ms. Brown said a banner would be needed and Ms. DiTullio said she would work on getting one made.

Old Business

Board Comments

There were none.

Public Comments

There were none.

Adjournment

Ms. DiTullio moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 pm, seconded by Ms. Hull and passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephen R. Babbie".

Recording Secretary

Received by email on 08/07/2023 @ 8:30 a.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield