



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



**HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Tuesday, October 3, 2023**

Members present: Anita Brown, Chairwoman  
Kathleen DiTullio, Vice Chairwoman  
Liz Yoho (arrived at 7:40 pm)  
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 7:33 pm by Chairwoman Brown. The pledge of allegiance immediately followed.

### **Correspondence and Announcements**

Ms. Brown said there were two emails one about adding an inlaw apartment in an existing building which Ms. Brown forwarded to Zoning and one about the last Housing Opportunities Commission meeting in terms of how many people are accessing the HOC webpage on the Town's site to view the draft plan. She was going to see if she could get that information from Jamie who handles the webpage.

### **Approval of Minutes from August meeting**

Ms. Hull said some places throughout the minutes she is referred to as Ms. Hill; Ms. Brown said this sentence on page 2 should read "feedback and ~~in~~ ~~meeting~~ discussion;" Mr. Kalinka said he was listed as voting twice on the approval of the draft plan and Ms. Hull was not listed and she voted in favor; Ms. Ayer said in the fourth paragraph of page two she was referring to duplexes or triplexes not two or three bedroom homes.

*Mr. Kalinka moved to approve the September 5, 2023 minutes as amended, seconded by Ms. Hull and passed unanimously.*

Ms. Yoho arrived at 7:40 pm.

### **New Business**

## **Review of draft HOC input for Planning Commission's 10/23/23 Listening Session**

Ms. Brown said Ms. Yoho, Ms. DiTullio and Ms. Hull met to discuss the 2014 POCD and what they felt should be continued.

We like the idea of using the Executive Summary with one change. Under the Goals on the second page, we would suggest changing #1 to Support a New Fairfield housing trust. We are not certain that the current New Fairfield Housing Trust Inc. will want to partner with our committee. It was decided to hold off on suggesting a change to "a" housing trust versus "the" housing trust until Ms. Ayer can have a conversation with them about things they can do as a housing trust.

Under items we would like to see included from the 2014 plan: ADU's with possibly no special permit and not requiring a sworn affidavit every 2 years. The 2014 plan speaks about ADU's being allowed under special permit if they meet all the requirements. Ms. Hall said in researching this issue for the New Fairfield draft plan submitted prior that Danbury had outlawed ADU's because they were being abused. Danbury's advice was to have a regular procedure for granting permission to do an ADU but not to require a special permit rather an administrative hearing. Ms. DiTullio asked if the occupancy could be limited and Ms. Ayer said the Town is not supposed to put a limit on but perhaps this could be done through a health code due to a septic concern. She said many ADUs become short term rentals and some towns do allow ADUs but not for short term rentals. Mr. Kavialauskus said Evan White, Zoning Enforcement Officer does like to do a 2 year check for compliance as there are some parts of town that have problems.

Ms. Hull asked if it would be appropriate to ask Mr. White to meet with the Housing Opportunities Committee and Ms. Brown said she would invite him to the November meeting to get information on making this process more user friendly but within legal guidelines.

Allowing mixed use of commercial and residential in the commercial district. (Possibly restricting rentals there to town support personnel; firemen, policemen, teachers). Ms. Brown said Ms. Ayer said this is a violation of fair housing. Ms. Ayer said the only way this could be allowed is if the funding were private but she said this is not really a best practice in terms of fair housing strategies. Ms. Hull said it is important to make rentals open to whomever can afford them.

Ms. Ayer suggested the wording be left as is since the draft plan allows it. Mr. Kalinka asked how certain projects were funded now with restrictions such as 55+ age limits and Ms. Ayer said there was funding awhile ago but now most funding is private. HUD did have a program for affordable, age restricted housing but there has been a policy shift to subsidizing units without restrictions.

Ms. DiTullio said Heritage Plaza which is privately owned has a huge attic space that could be converted to small efficiencies or one bedroom units.

Conservation subdivisions / clustered housing: In regard to conservation subdivisions Ms. DiTullio said these were mentioned in both the 2004 and 2014 POCD and she noted this committee is the housing opportunities committee not the affordable housing committee. Ms. Ayer said cluster housing or conservation subdivisions do not necessarily lead to affordable housing because of the cost of the homeowners association fees. She said if someone wanted to

do a 20 acre cluster housing subdivision, they would still have to purchase the 20 acres and she has not yet seen one of these that has proven to be affordable. Ms. DiTullio said there could be a percentage of units that are set aside as affordable. Ms. Hall said she did not believe the subdivision regulations have a required percentage to be set aside as affordable and maybe the HOC wants to recommend that. Ms. Ayer said that is called inclusionary zoning and towns can offer density bonuses for affordability.

Ms. DiTullio said years ago builders proposing subdivisions could provide open space or provide funding as a way to get more density in subdivisions. Ms. Ayer said Goshen still does that and the money goes into a land acquisition fund for open space or affordable housing.

Ms. Brown asked if the HOC could recommend 20% of housing be affordable in the creation of a subdivision. Ms. Ayer said there is a strategy in the draft plan about the creation of a municipal housing fund.

Encourage the building of low density affordable units that fit into the character of neighborhoods. Ms. Ayer said the Town can't refer to character and low density is a subjective term. She said the Planning Commission would probably be advised to not use that word. Mr. Kalinka asked if they could use the words architectural style. Ms. Ayer said yes and in terms of low density the words could be appropriate density. Ms. Brown said they could make the suggestion to encourage architecturally similar with apropos density.

Ms. Yoho asked if they could recommend that multi family housing not be restricted to just elderly. Ms. Hall said the HOC could make the recommendation as Planning wants the input. Ms. Yoho noted the 2014 plan has most of the items the HOC is recommending but nothing came of it.

Ms. Hull explained why the senior housing was in the 2014 plan as the Commission on Aging was embarrassed that there was so little senior housing available. Ms. DiTullio said part of the reason the Town wanted to go with the 55 and older population as condos was to assure less student aged population. Ms. Hall said the head of the Zoning Commission will likely advocate for senior housing and not for a cross section.

Ms. Brown noted 53% of survey respondents said they did not feel that would be able to stay in New Fairfield. The consensus of the HOC was to recommend encouraging architecturally similar building with apropos density for multi family housing that is not age restricted.

### **Discuss interest in exploring support for NF Housing Trust**

Ms. Brown said Ms. Ayer will be meeting with the Trust to discuss enlarging the scope of what they can do based on what she has done in other Towns. The meeting will be October 24<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 AM.

### **Confirm plans and signups for HOC Booth at NFDay 10/14/23**

Ms. Brown said Parks and Recreation reached out to determine if the HOC could make the date of October 14<sup>th</sup> and most of the Committee said they could help at some point during that day.

### **Discuss enhancing further community feedback on Draft Housing Affordability Plan**

Ms. Brown said she had submitted a letter to the editor; the draft plan is on the website; an article has been submitted to the Town Tribune; and Jean Green, producer of the New Fairfield Newsletter, has agreed to put a link to the plan on the website in the newsletter. Ms. DiTullio asked if there will be copies of the plan available at New Fairfield Day and Ms. Brown said yes and there would be sign ups for information on volunteering and for those who want more information on the plan.

### **Old Business**

### **Board Comments**

Mr. Kalinka said this was a constructive meeting.

### **Public Comments**

There was none.

### **Adjournment**

*Ms. Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 pm, seconded by Ms. DiTullio and passed unanimously.*

Minutes recorded by:

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

Recording Secretary

Received by email on 10/6/2023 @ 8:30 a.m.  
By Tricia Quinn, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield