



Town of New Fairfield, Connecticut
HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, November 7, 2023



Members Present: Anita Brown, Chairwoman
Kathleen DiTullio
Kathy Hull
Jim Mandella
Roberta Anderson (joined at 8 pm)

Ex-Officio: Tom Kavaliauskas, Zoning
Evan White, Zoning Enforcement Officer

Also Present: Jocelyn Ayer, Consultant

Ms. Brown called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Correspondence and Announcements

There were none.

Approval of Minutes from October meeting

Ms. Brown made a correction to the minutes on page 3 regarding survey respondents and said the percentage of respondents saying they might not be able to stay in New Fairfield was 48% and not 53% as stated.

Mr. Mandella moved to approve the minutes with the correction, seconded by Ms. DiTullio and passed unanimously.

New Business

Guest: NF Zoning Enforcement Officer regarding ADU Regulations

Ms. Brown welcomed Mr. White, Zoning Enforcement Officer, for attending this meeting.

Mr. White discussed the ADU issue and said if the request meets the zone requirements it can go through a special permit request. He mentioned 2 Woods Way which is 1.25 acres so it meets the 1 acre lot requirement and the front road length. He said lots with 2 acres minimum and 150 feet of road frontage can apply for a special permit. Special permits call for a site plan and not a public hearing. By state statute if a lot meets all the requirements then an ADU is as of right and

has to be approved. New Fairfield opted out of public act 129 so it does not have to allow as of right.

Ms. DiTullio asked how many lots would qualify to have an ADU and Mr. White said not too many fall short in the 2 acre zones.

Mr. Mandella asked if zoning knew how many ADUs there were in town. Mr. White said they did not know because accurate records were not kept. He said there are at least 200 legal ADUs.

Ms. Hull asked if there were any incentives that could be used to add ADUs for affordable housing. Mr. White said people who meet requirements and could get a second income don't seem to be interested. He wasn't sure if they were concerned about income taxes.

Ms. Brown said there are two parts to the ADU - that it is not an increased tax burden rather an increase in lot value.

Ms. DiTullio said homeowners that have illegal ADUs need to know if they don't report to their insurance companies if there is a fire they might not get coverage.

Ms. Brown said at the last HOC meeting Mr. Kavilauskas said there was a two year compliance check. Mr. White said by regulation it is required to submit a sworn affidavit giving the ZEO the right to inspect the dwelling.

Ms. Brown said Michael Santoro from the Department of Housing had suggested other ways to move through the process other than a special permit. Mr. White said the legal affidavit is administrative. His predecessors were not easy to work with regarding ADUs.

Ms. DiTullio asked about adding apartments above commercial buildings and Mr. White said this would be a great asset to the Town and ZBA has granted some variances in the past regarding the one apartment for every 1/2 acre per commercial property. He said he would be an advocate for this in the Zoning regulation rewrite.

Ms. Brown asked if the Housing Trust can get reinvigorated and wanted to build some affordable housing units where would they look for open land and Mr. White said they could use the GIS mapping in the assessors office.

Ms. Anderson joined the meeting at 8 pm.

Update on Planning Listening Session/ Housing Trust Meeting

Ms. Brown said the meeting went well with Planning with props, videos, the executive summary and the housing affordability plan.

Ms. Brown said Ms. Ayer met with the members of the Housing Trust and laid out the possibilities and how they can help implement the affordability plan.

Ms. DiTullio said the Trust is trying to set up a meeting with the five members to discuss moving forward and how they wish to proceed.

Address start of 35 day review for draft Housing Affordability Plan

Ms. Brown said she would like to start the 35 day review process as soon as possible. She said if she gets the plan posted by tomorrow the 35th day would be December 10th. During that period she would like to have another community forum both in person and virtually. Ms. Ayer said the plan has to be posted for a minimum of 35 days she said the Committee should be prepared to make changes but most are typically not substantial.

Approval of 2024 Calendar Meeting Dates

Following are the proposed 2024 meeting dates for the NF HOC: All are the first Tuesday of every month except November, which is bumped to the second Tuesday due to the Presidential election on the first Tuesday. Meetings will typically be held on zoom.

January 2, 2024

February 6, 2024

March 5, 2024

April 2, 2024

May 7, 2024

June 4, 2024

July 2, 2024

August 6, 2024

September 3, 2024

October 1, 2024

*November 12, 2024

December 3, 2024

Ms. DiTullio moved to approve the 2024 meeting schedule, seconded by Mr. Mandella and passed unanimously.

Aye: Brown, DiTullio, Hull, Anderson, Mandella

Old Business

Board Comments

Ms. Brown said she spoke to Jamie Williams who is the tech person handling the Town's webpage and he said at this point there is no way to determine the number of people accessing the page.

Public Comments

There were none.

Adjournment

Ms. DiTullio moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 pm, seconded by Ms. Hull and passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephen R. Babbie". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Recording Secretary

Received by email on 11/13/2023 @ 8:30 a.m.
by Tricia Quinn, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield