



Town of New Fairfield, Connecticut
HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, December 5, 2023



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

Ex-Officio: Tom Kavaliauskas, Zoning
Khris Hall

Also Present: Jocelyn Ayer, Consultant
Melissa Lindsay, First Selectwoman
Thomas Perkins, Board of Selectmen
John Moran, Zoning

Ms. Brown called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Correspondence and Announcements

Ms. Brown said she received emails about the technology changeover which will be discussed further on the agenda.

Approval of Minutes from November meetings

Ms. Brown made a correction to the minutes in reference to Jamie from the help desk that his last name is Wallace not Williams.

Ms. Anderson moved to approve the minutes of November 7th with the correction and November 20th, seconded by Mr. Kalinka and passed 4-0-1.

Yes: Brown, DiTullio, Hull, Anderson

Abstain: Kalinka

New Business

Review of Draft Housing Affordability Plan

Ms. Brown said legislation introduced in 2017 requires all towns to have a housing affordability plan. In 2022 the Housing Opportunities Committee got to work on New Fairfield's plan and sent out a

survey and accessed data about the Town. Some of that data showed that 1,280 households in New Fairfield spend more than 30% of their income on housing and 10% spend more than 50%. Over 40% said they did not anticipate staying in Town after retirement. She said the survey results and outline of the draft plan were presented to Planning and Zoning and now the HOC is in the required 35 day review period before Board of Selectman approval.

Ms. Brown introduced Ms. Ayer who has been guiding the HOC through the Housing Plan Process. Ms. Ayer is the Director of the Litchfield County Housing Collective.

Ms. Ayer said the HOC has had several meetings where the housing plan has been discussed and it is now on the website for public review and the committee is inviting public comment on the plan.

Ms. Ayer started her presentation with a variety of affordable housing projects to show what affordable housing looks like in area towns. The projects included Stuart Farms Apartments in Kent; Sarum Village in Salisbury; Bernhardt Meadows in Roxbury; Vincent Farm in Washington; and East Main Street in Salisbury.

Ms. Ayer then went through the various parts of the plan including the introduction and why the plan was needed. The plan defines housing affordability; why housing is so unaffordable in New Fairfield; the number of dedicated affordable housing units (New Fairfield has 66 units); the process the HOC went through; next steps; an assessment of housing needs and current stock; the demographic trends; land use and zoning assessment including accessory unit allowances; definition of 8-30g which is the State affordable appeals act; protected land in New Fairfield; and goals and strategies.

The main goal is to create 20 units of affordable housing over the next five years. The plan also discussed who is responsible for establishing the goals including the HOC, Board of Selectmen and Zoning, for instance. Ms. Ayer went through the guidance document which highlighted the goals and strategies and accountable parties.

Ms. Brown invited public comment.

Thomas Perkins, Field Avenue and a newly elected member of the Board of Selectmen, asked what types of zoning some of the affordable housing projects were constructed on and Ms. Ayer said in Washington they used soil based zoning. They also used the 8-30g statute to get the housing built.

Mr. Perkins asked what the square footage was on some of the houses and Ms. Ayer said the three units in Salisbury were all three bedroom houses but they have water and sewer in the center of Salisbury which allows for more density and additional development. She said different zoning tools can be used to help get affordable housing built.

Ms. Hull said she had a resident of New Fairfield approach her about legacy planning and donating land to be designated as affordable. Ms. Ayer said the Salisbury Housing Trust had a couple sell their house to them at a reasonable rate below market value so the Trust could turn it around and sell it as affordable.

Ms. Brown noted this housing plan has been posted on the Town website and posters have been placed around Town with a QR code for people to download. The zoning commission has received a draft plan and she needs to forward it to the First Selectwoman and Board of Selectmen. Ms. Brown said people could send feedback to anbrown@newfairfieldct.gov.

Discuss timeline for 35 Day Review Period

Ms. Brown said the 35 day period ends on December 17th. She said she will reach out to the First Selectwoman to see when they can get on the Board of Selectmen agenda. Mr. Perkins asked if the last day someone could give feedback was December 17th and Ms. Ayer responded that the time could be extended and the 35 day period is set by State statute 8-30j as the minimum.

Invitation to BOS for Ex Officio Representative

Ms. Brown said the ex-officio members are Mr. Kavilauskus from Zoning, Corey Newmann from Planning and Ms. Hall from the Board of Selectmen. She said she would reach out to see who the new ex-officio member would be from the Board.

Changeover to Office 365 Impact

Ms. Brown said she hoped everyone got the email about setting up the new newfairfieldct.gov email address. She said Jamie Wallace could help those who needed the assistance.

Old Business

Board Comments

Ms. Brown said there is a Freedom of Information workshop on December 19th at 6 pm via Zoom. An invite would be forwarded to the committee.

Public Comments

There were none.

Ms. Brown thanked all who came on to the meeting tonight.

Adjournment

Ms. DiTullio moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 pm, seconded by Mr. Kalinka and passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:



Recording Secretary

Received by email on 12/08/2023 @ 8:30 a.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield