



Town of New Fairfield, Connecticut
HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, February 6, 2024



Members Present: Anita Brown, Chairwoman
Kathleen DiTullio
Kathy Hull
Roberta Anderson
Rich Kalinka
Liz Yoho (arrived at 7:37 pm)

Ex-Officio: Tom Kavaliauskas, Zoning
Pat DelMonaco, Selectwoman

Also Present: Jocelyn Ayer, Consultant

Ms. Brown called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Correspondence and Announcements

Ms. Brown reminded all to set up their Newfairfieldct.gov email address.

Approval of Minutes from January meeting

Ms. Anderson moved to approve the minutes of January 2nd as presented, seconded by Ms. Hull and passed 4-0-1.

Yes: Brown, DiTullio, Hull, Anderson

Abstain: Kalinka

New Business

Report on Draft Housing Affordability Plan approval from Planning

Ms. Brown said she and Ms. DiTullio presented the plan to Planning on January 22nd and the consensus was to move forward with sending the draft to the Board of Selectmen. She said they hope the HAP is included in the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Addition to draft Housing Affordability Plan and timing to Board of Selectmen Presentation

Ms. Brown said Ms. Ayer is suggesting a possible addition to the plan and asked her to explain what that was. Ms. Ayer said she had reached out to Habitat for Humanity that serves New Fairfield about

resources for aging in place and they have a fund available for income eligible seniors for certain home repairs.

(Ms. Yoho arrived at 7:37 pm.)

Ms. Ayer said basic repairs include grab bars, fixing stairs and railings, yard cleanup, etc. She felt this would be a good addition to the plan. Ms. Hull said she does referrals for her seniors to this service and felt it would be good to add as well.

Ms. Anderson moved to add the Aging in Place resource per the Housatonic Habitat for Humanity funding program, seconded by Ms. Yoho and passed unanimously.

Ms. Brown said she was able to get the presentation of the plan on the Board of Selectmen agenda for March 14th and encouraged all committee members to participate as it will be a Zoom meeting. She also invited members to present parts of the plan if they were interested.

Review of Building Community Support for Housing Playbook

Ms. Ayer said the Litchfield County advisory committee prepared a playbook to help housing groups have a conversation about affordable housing. The playbook includes pictures of actual affordable housing complexes and units in Litchfield County; challenges of creating affordable housing and some myths such as the issue is too big to address locally; building optimism; navigating disruptive comments; sharing stories of success; and developing an authentic, ongoing community engagement strategy.

There is also a toolkit which gives specific examples of things such as letters to the editor; newsletters; social media posts; how to speak at Town Meetings, etc. The toolkit also contains FAQs.

Ms. Brown suggested everyone take a look at the playbook and toolkit and they could discuss it at the March meeting.

Old Business

BOS approval of consultant's contract through December, 2024

Ms. Brown said on January 11th the Board of Selectmen approved the extension of Ms. Ayer's contract through the end of 2024.

Board Comments

Ms. DiTullio asked if the Committee should invite State Representatives to a future meeting to hear from them on affordable housing issues and opportunities. Ms. Brown said she and Ms. DiTullio can get together to reach out to them for that invite.

Mr. Kavaliauskas said Zoning held a special meeting on January 16th to discuss rezoning of the October House Property on Route 37 which is currently zoned single family and has four acres. There is

potential for a multi family district zone change request to build elderly housing, though not necessarily affordable housing. There might be two affordable units out of 24 proposed units. Ms. Ayer said if there was a local non profit housing group they could build 24 affordable units.

Public Comments

Ken Huwer, a New Fairfield resident, said what the timeline was on when New Fairfield would have to reach the 10% affordable housing number and Ms. Ayer said there is no timeline. They are open to 8-30g until they reach 10%. He asked if the court rules in favor of the developer does that mean they can do whatever they want and Ms. Ayer said generally yes, though they do have to consider safety and health in the development process. He asked if the buyer used CHFA for a mortgage would that house become affordable and Ms. Ayer said it would but the inventory was very low at that level.

Adjournment

Ms. Hull moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 pm, seconded by Mr. Kalinka and passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:

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

Recording Secretary

Received by email on 02/08/2024 @ 4:45 p.m
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield