



Town of New Fairfield
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, March 4, 2024



Present: Myke Furhman, Chair

James Kloos

Kathleen DiTullio

Mark Werner

Greg Manning

Michael Kiviat

Also Present: Evan White, Zoning

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm by Mr. Furhman followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Opening Public Comment & Participation

There was none.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion and Possible Action on endorsing the Housing Affordability Plan

Mr. Furhman asked if any commissioners had thoughts on the plan. Mr. Werner said he had looked at it and thought the Housing Opportunities Committee put a comprehensive and well thought out plan together. He said housing can only help with economic development in New Fairfield.

Ms. DiTullio said she is the co-chair of the HOC and as a realtor she sees the people seeking housing in New Fairfield. She noted the fire department, which is volunteer, lost three members due to the cost of housing.

Mr. Furhman said young families can't afford to move here and he would be in favor of endorsing the plan. He said some of the data was opening as to how New Fairfield compares to other communities.

Mr. Manning said individuals are priced out of the market and it is incumbent on developers to make sure units are offered at an affordable market rate. He was said to hear that the fire department lost qualified individuals due to housing concerns.

Mr. Furhman said the goal as established in this plan is to build 20 affordable housing units over 5 years. He noted the goals included supporting the New Fairfield Housing Trust; making first time homebuyers aware of options; downsizing options for older adults; increase awareness of housing opportunities; and to get the strategies in the plan implemented.

Mr. Kloos noted every town is responsible for creating a percentage of affordable housing. He said one of the issues in New Fairfield is the lack of sewer and water.

Ms. DiTullio said the State set the standard of each Town having 10% of its unit set aside as affordable and if they don't then the developer can bypass Planning and Zoning laws other than

health and safety.

Mr. Werner said the lack of infrastructure doesn't prevent affordable housing but it certainly does not help.

Ms. DiTullio said the starting rent in New Fairfield is \$2,200 per month if any units in that price range can be found.

Anita Brown, Chair of the HOC, said the committee did a survey to assess the needs and to hear people's perceptions in regards to affordable housing. They also had a forum to share the survey results and a forum to share the draft plan. They have presented before Planning and Zoning and will present to the Board of Selectmen on March 14th. They would like to see this plan become part of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Mr. Werner moved to endorse the Housing Affordability Plan, seconded by Ms. DiTullio and passed unanimously.

Aye: Furhman, Werner, DiTullio, Kloos, Manning, Kiviat

Discussion and Possible Action on WPCA Sewer Plan

Mr. Furhman said the sewer would benefit the Town and the Housing Affordability. Mr. Werner said he listened to the session when the WPCA plan was discussed and said it was informative, educational and dispelled any misconceptions and miscommunications.

Ms. DiTullio said the current businesses in Town will have failing septic systems at some point in the future. She said imagine the businesses closing because of health issues.

Mr. Werner said people don't realize the cost to replace a septic system. Ms. DiTullio said the expense of the bonds would be paid over 25 years. Mr. Werner said the expense is also borne by sewer users.

Mr. Manning said the sewer project would broaden the tax base from a commercial perspective.

Mr. Furhman noted when the survey was sent out people wanted more restaurants which having a sewer system would help.

Mr. Furhman moved to endorse the WPCA Sewer Plan as currently written seconded by Mr. Werner and passed unanimously.

Aye: Furhman, Werner, DiTullio, Kloos, Manning, Kiviat

Closing Public Comment

There was none.

Adjournment

Mr. Furhman moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:01 pm, seconded by Mr. DiTullio and

passed unanimously.

Aye: Furhman, Werner, DiTullio, Kloos, Manning, Kiviat

Minutes recorded by:

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

Recording Secretary

Received by email on 03/06/2024 @ 1:56 p.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield