



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



**HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, July 2, 2024**

Present: Anita Brown, Chairwoman
Kathy Hull
Kathleen DiTullio, Vice Chairwoman
Jim Mandella
Rich Kalinka

Also Present: Jocelyn Ayer, Consultant
Tom Kavaliauskas

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Correspondence and Announcements

Ms. Brown said there were none.

Approval of Minutes from May and June meeting

Mr. Kalinka moved to approve the May minutes as presented, seconded by Ms. Brown.

Ms. Ayer said there was one error on page 2 which said the "rule" of the Zoning Commission but the word should be "role."

Mr. Kalinka moved to amend the motion to approve the minutes with the correction, seconded by Ms. Brown and passed unanimously.

Aye: Brown, Hull, Mandella, DiTullio, Kalinka

Mr. Kalinka asked if the June notes needed to be approved and it was advised to approve them since they were filed.

Ms. Brown moved to approve the June notes, seconded by Ms. Hull and passed 3-0-2.

Aye: Brown, Hull, Mandella

Abstain: Kalinka, DiTullio

New Business

Guest: NF Housing Trust

Ms. Brown said she had invited Maureen Salerno of the New Fairfield Housing Trust to speak about what they were doing and how HOC could partner with them.

Ms. Salerno said a lot of work was put into creating the Housing Trust. She said she is the President and the New Fairfield Housing Trust Inc. was created in April of 2012. The idea of the trust came out of a forum held by the Commission on Aging specifically in regard to housing. At that time, Governor Malloy had set aside \$300 million for housing. Two members of the Trust Al Mardis who filed the original paperwork and Tom Dube were aware of a lot behind the meeting house which was owned by the Town and the Trust tried to get a lease on that property. The trust members went to most of the commissions and boards to explain the proposal and at a public meeting about the plan the residents on Oakwood were upset about the proposal. A new administration was elected in New Fairfield and the trust was told at that time that the property was not going to be available to them. She said the trust is devoted to affordable housing for the elderly.

Ms. Brown read the mission of the Housing Trust: The mission of the New Fairfield Housing Trust, Inc., is to provide affordable elderly housing opportunities in the Town of New Fairfield. Only persons 62 years of age or over who earn at or below 80% of the area median income can be considered for this opportunity. New Fairfield Housing Trust, Inc. will use every available public and private financing program to achieve this goal. The Trust's mission is to help address the unmet housing needs of the Town's elderly.

Mr. Mandella asked what type of housing was being considered and Ms. Salerno said they were looking at 750 square foot rental housing similar to Brooks Quarry in Brookfield. He asked if Zoning had an issue with the plan and she said once the Town withdrew the possibility of a lease on the land they did not go ahead to Zoning.

Ms. Ayer asked if the trust would consider not restricting the housing to only the elderly as the majority of public money now available for housing does not allow for age restrictions. Ms. Salerno said she would have to talk to the trust members but she felt they would be open to multi generational housing.

Ms. Brown asked what the Housing Opportunities Committee and the Trust could move forward - maybe an expansion of membership, perhaps holding an open house to give people a chance to learn about the trust and the HOC.

Tom Dube II who is a member of the trust said he appreciated this opportunity and would look for other avenues of providing housing for people in New Fairfield. He said the different income levels need to be addressed. Ms. Ayer said she has worked with housing trusts in Litchfield County and they have figured out how to build housing with no city services such as water or sewer. Their niche seems to be 8 to 10 unit sizes. She also noted New Fairfield is open to 8-30g development. She said she could help a non profit get access to resources. She said Kent Housing

Trust added people to committees such as project committees and then some after working on a project joined the board. She suggested reaching out to realtors, fire department volunteers - people who are aware of the properties in town. She noted it is easier to get volunteers on board when there is an actual project to work on. She said an open house to get the word out about the trust might work to get people interested.

Ms. Brown said they could hold an open house maybe in October. Ms. DiTullio suggested at New Fairfield Days in September they could get information out. She also suggested that each member of the HOC should commit to inviting one person that might be interested to the open house. Ms. Salerno said they should tell people what the next steps are and be very specific about the goals and accomplishments.

Ms. Brown suggested a joint subcommittee from the trust and the HOC. Ms. DiTullio said she would work on the committee since she serves on both. Mr. Dube said Tom Dube Senior was interested in volunteering as well.

Tentative date for BOS Approval of Draft HAP

Ms. Brown spoke to the First Selectwoman about the date for the potential approval of the Housing Action Plan and it will be a zoom meeting on August 8th at 7:30 pm.

Discuss Zoning Commission items related to housing

Ms. Brown said the Zoning Commission will be holding a meeting on July 10th via zoom for public comment on a regulation change to move from a minimum of 5 acres to a new minimum of 4 acres. Mr. Kavaliauskas said this in regards to the senior housing proposed on the October property. This change however would be for the whole town.

Ms. Ayer said reducing the minimum lot size to create more housing opportunities make sense.

Ms. Brown said there was also a meeting scheduled for July 17th to discuss ADUs in residential districts and to create a more holistic approach to zoning versus the somewhat scattered approach that has happened over the years.

On July 15th the Planning Commission will hold an in person meeting to discuss the process on the POCD.

Old Business

Marching in Fourth of July parade

Ms. Brown said she will be marching in the parade with a QR code for people to look up the HAP. She also congratulated Ms. Hull on being selected the Grand Marshal.

Board Comments

Ms. DiTullio thanked Stephanie Barksdale for the recording secretary job that she is doing saying she takes detailed minutes and it is appreciated.

Mr. Kalinka said hearing comments tonight he feels that everything is aligning and converging for the HOC and felt like things were going in the right direction.

Public Comments

Jennifer Pappas, a New Fairfield resident, asked how one could watch the videos of the meeting and Ms. Brown answered they are on the town website.

Dan Kearney, a New Fairfield resident, said there was a need for affordable housing and asked what might be built on Meeting House Hill. Ms. Brown said that was a project looked at in 2015. She said the HOC plan is to develop 20 houses or units over a 5 year period.

Adjournment

Ms. DiTullio moved to adjourn at 8:39 pm, seconded by Mr. Mandella and passed unanimously.

Aye: Brown, DiTullio, Hull, Mandella, Kalinka

Minutes recorded by:



Recording Secretary

Received by email on 07/05/2024 @ 10:02 a.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield