



Town of New Fairfield
Housing Opportunities Committee
Minutes
August 6, 2024



Present: Anita Brown, Chair
Roberta Anderson
Kathy Hull
James Mandella

Also Present: Tomas Kavaliauskas

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by Chairwoman Brown. The pledge of allegiance immediately followed.

Correspondence and Announcements

There were none.

Approval of Minutes from July meeting

Ms. Brown made two edits - on page 3 under Zoning discussion, first paragraph the discussion was about the October "House" property. The second edit was in the fourth paragraph referencing the discussion of updating the "POCD" versus the process.

Ms. Hull edited page 2, under the guest speaker, second paragraph "behind Meetinghouse" to "behind Meetinghouse Hill School."

Mr. Mandella moved to approve the minutes with corrections as noted, seconded by Ms. Hull and passed unanimously.

Aye: Brown, Hull, Anderson, Mandella

New Business

Finalize points for Revised draft HAP BOS presentation on zoom, 8/8/2024

Ms. Brown said she plans to share the committees annual report with the Board of Selectmen but wanted comment from the committee members first. Ms. Brown presented the points from the annual report:

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

Dedicated monthly public HOC meetings and periodic forums to inform NF resident's awareness regarding housing needs. Guest speakers: Zoning Enforcement Officer and Housing Trust.

Summer 2023: Draft Housing Affordability Plan (HAP) is developed based on 2023 survey and NF Housing data

Fall 2023: 35 day posting of HAP for public comment
Zoning Enforcement Officer as guest
Two public forums sharing draft HAP
Information meeting NF Housing Trust and Consultant

Winter 2023: Approval of extension of consultant's contract by newly elected administration
Setting Budget

Spring 2024: Presentation of draft HAP to BOS
Combined followup meeting of Planning/Zoning/BOS
Consultation with Zoning regarding specific strategies
Multiple presentations to Planning regarding POCD
HOC presentation at Commission on Aging Forum

Summer 2024: Revisions to draft HAP following consultation with Zoning/Planning/BOS
35 day posting of revised draft of HAP
Sip n Stroll public information
NF Housing Trust as guest, potential collaboration
July 4 Parade public information: Tin "Man"

Late Summer: Presentation of revised draft of HAP to BOS

Ms. Hull said this report covered the points and there is a lot that has been done already by this committee.

Ms. Hull moved to approve the annual report as presented, seconded by Ms. Brown and passed unanimously.

Aye: Brown, Hull, Anderson, Mandella

Ms. Brown said she would do a brief intro including the annual report and would then touch on the changes made rather than the full housing action plan. She will address some of the key findings about housing in New Fairfield including 30% are cost burdened; 1% is dedicated to affordable housing but the state suggests 10% which is why New Fairfield is subject to the 8-30g statute; and 48% of residents think they will not be able to stay in New Fairfield during retirement; among other points. Jocelyn Ayers, the consultant, will talk about the goals and strategies and the changes made based on the collaboration with Zoning and the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Hull said she would be able to present some part of the plan as needed.

Planning for New Fairfield Day HOC Booth, Sept. 7

Ms. Brown said the booth will have pictures of affordable housing and will bring more awareness to the Housing Opportunities Committee and its work. It will also be an opportunity to make people aware of the Housing Trust. The Trust members are making edits to the document that Ms. Ayers shared with them to use for the booth.

Old Business

Progress on Housing Trust Fact Sheet

Ms. Brown said she has met with Maureen Salerno of the Trust about the fact sheet which will be presented at the September 3rd HOC meeting in draft form. She said the hope is to get people more interested in what the Trust does as more concrete projects come up.

Updates on Zoning Commission items related to housing

Ms. Brown said there is a Zoom meeting for the Zoning Commission for public comment on the October House property zoning change request. Mr. Kavaliauskas said he was not able to connect with the attorney who was going to speak about the impact to the Town. The change is proposed for the business district and how the 1500' line is impacted.

Ms. Brown said there is also an August 21st meeting with the consultant Glenn Chalders of Planmetric for the continued rewrite of the Zoning regulations. Mr. Kavaliauskas said they are going over the regulations from the beginning and also looking at changes as recommended by the consultant. He said this is a great way to learn the regulations. Part of this rewrite is an effort to make Zoning permitting more user friendly.

Ms. Brown said the Planning Commission will be holding a public meeting on September 9th at the main fire house to present a draft of the Plan of Conservation and Development. She is hoping the HAP will be approved by that point so it can be made part of the POCD.

Board Comments

Ms. Hull introduced Anne Weisberg who is running for the State House district 108 and said she is interested in what the HOC is doing.

Public Comments

Anne Weisberg, a Sherman resident running for the 108th House seat said all the Towns in this district are having a housing crisis. She appreciated the information provided in the HAP and said she helped write an opinion piece for the Town Tribune which mentioned the work of the HOC.

Adjournment

Mr. Mandella moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 pm, seconded by Ms. Anderson and passed unanimously.

Aye: Brown, Hull, Anderson, Mandella

Minutes recorded by:



Recording Secretary

Received by email on 08/08/2024 @ 3:35 p.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield