

New Fairfield Housing Opportunities Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 1, 2024

Present: Anita Brown, Chair
Kathleen DiTullio
Kathy Hull
Rich Kalinka
Roberta Anderson
Elizabeth Yoho

Also Present: Tom Kavilaukas, Zoning

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 pm by Ms. Brown followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Correspondence and Announcements

Ms. Brown said she received an email from Kersten Bennett re: congregate housing opportunities in other towns. Ms. Hull said she is aware of two congregate housing units in Bethel and Ridgefield and the residents need to qualify for them with their income. She said Ridgefield, she thought, was run through a housing authority and Bethel was started through the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Approval of Minutes from August meeting

Ms. Brown moved to approve the minutes of the August 6, 2024 meeting, seconded by Ms. Anderson and passed 3-0-3.

Aye: Brown, Hull, Anderson

Abstain: Yoho, Kalinka, DiTullio

Acknowledgement of minutes from September meeting held without quorum

Ms. Brown said there was no quorum at the last meeting so she wanted to acknowledge that the minutes were taken and filed but there was no business conducted requiring a motion.

New Business

Discussion related to HAP goals/strategies priorities

Ms. Brown said now that the Housing Affordability Plan has been approved and sent to the Office of Policy and Management for recording, the HOC will need to implement it. It has also been placed in the draft Plan of Conservation and Development.

Ms. Brown said she attended a housing summit that Jocelyn Ayer helped organize for the Litchfield County Housing Affordability Committee. She said Maria Horn, State Representative

and Sean Ghio were present and they said there will be \$800 million available for housing funding. Ms. Brown went through some of the slides of 21 different affordable housing projects either already built or some in planning stages in Litchfield County. Some of the affordable housing developments are using solar to offset the cost of utilities.

Ms. Brown said the HOC should begin to prioritize and implement the goals in the HAP so they can make a report to the Board of Selectmen about progress made in the last year. She started with goal number one which is to support the New Fairfield Housing Trust. She suggested that a meeting be set up to invite people to learn about the housing trust and perhaps join to reactivate the Trust.

Ms. Hull said it might be more successful if members of the HOC reached out personally to people they might know who could be interested in what the Housing Trust is. Ms. DiTullio said the HOC members could invite people but they could also put information in the Town Tribune that volunteers are needed.

Ms. Brown said she will bring the Housing Trust fact sheet to the New Fairfield Days which has been postponed to October 19th. Ms. Yoho asked if the Trust was senior focused as it had been or will look at a greater perspective. Ms. Brown said she thought they were broader than just senior housing.

Ms. Hull suggested goal number three should be looked at: Allow the development of smaller sized homes that could be “downsizing” options for older adults. Ms. Brown said this should be done when Zoning finishes the rewrite of its regulations. Mr. Kavilauskas said the Zoning Commission has looked at making the 5 acre lot minimum stipulation a consideration on a case by case basis such as the October House property which has requested a change. He said the Commission will hold a public comment session before the rewrites are finally approved.

Ms. Brown noted the public is invited to the Zoning Commission meetings and the next one will be October 16th at the library at 7 pm.

Ms. Yoho said the focus right now should be goal one with the Trust and said goal two: Support affordable first-time homebuyer options, really requires some research about options and then publicizing on the website or the Town Tribune.

2025 budget: new items requested, new template

Ms. Brown noted there is a new finance director and they are requiring an official mission statement. Ms. Ayer had suggested the mission is to “implement the Town Housing Affordability Plan and update it as needed.

Ms. DiTullio moved to accept the mission statement, seconded by Mr. Kalinka and passed unanimously.

Aye: Brown, Hull, Anderson, Kalinka, DiTullio, Yoho

Ms. Brown said the HOC still has funds for the consultant and secretarial funds. Mr. Kalinka suggested a budget for community events, flyers and posters. Ms. Yoho also suggested a budget for advertising in the Tribune.

Old Business

Updates: Draft POCD, Zoning Regs

Ms. Brown said the draft POCD was presented at a meeting on September 9th and there were mostly Board and committee members and some public. She said the POCD requires a 65 day public review time with a final vote scheduled for December 2nd.

Board Comments

Mr. Kalinka said getting the HAP included as part of the POCD is a major accomplishment and the HOC should be pleased about that.

Public Comments

There were none.

Adjournment

Ms. Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 pm, seconded by Ms. Hull and passed unanimously.

Aye: Brown, Kalinka, Hull, Anderson, DiTullio, Yoho

Minutes recorded by

Stephanie R Barksdale

Recording Secretary

Received by email on 10/03/2024 @ 3:27 p.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield