

Town of Fairfield
Office of Community & Economic Development
Minutes of Special Meeting of the Affordable Housing Committee
January 26, 2022

The Affordable Housing Committee of the Town of Fairfield held a Special Meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 26, 2022. The meeting was held via Zoom.

PRESENT: Steve Grathwohl; Carrie Makover; Joanne Csonka; Gwynne Alperovich

ALSO: Mark Barnhart, Director of Community and Economic Development; Glenn Chalder, Planimetrics

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Grathwohl called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. He noted that due to the format of the meeting only members of the committee would be permitted to contribute.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN:

Mr. Chalder presented a proposed schedule for completion of the plan. He noted that a public hearing is required prior to adoption of the plan, for which the Town must provide 35 days-notice. He noted that the plan is due by June 1st.

Mr. Barnhart reviewed the Committee member's responses to a brief survey that he undertook in an effort to clarify the Committee's goals and strategies. Mr. Barnhart noted consensus among Committee members in favor of a goal of providing a wider range of housing options with a focus on creating more affordable housing units.

Mr. Barnhart provided a run-down on strategies that were favored by Committee members. In order of priority, based on weighted score, the top strategies were:

- Amending the town's zoning regulations to increase the affordable set aside requirement (5.88);
- Revising the designed residence district regulations to provide more housing options (5.75);
- Working with the Fairfield Housing Authority to identify property on which to develop assisted housing units (5.38);
- Establishing preferred design guidelines to promote affordable and middle housing (5.00);
- Incentivizing property owners to deed restrict existing units through tax abatements or other inducements (4.75)

- Expanding opportunities to create middle (2-4 Units) housing (3.63)

Committee members discussed the Executive Summary and Draft Report. Several members suggested shortening the Executive Summary and expressed concern about the number of strategies, recommending instead that the report emphasize 4-6 priorities. Members also noted that many strategies pertain to land use policies and regulations and require the support of the Town Plan & Zoning Commission. Mr. Barnhart noted efforts underway to complete an update to the Town's Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD), and members voiced a desire to incorporate the Affordable Housing Plan's recommendations into the POCD. The consensus among the members is that they would like to see a shorter, more visionary report. Mr. Chalder thanked the members for the feedback, pledged to incorporate these changes and provide an updated draft in advance of the February meeting.

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Mr. Barnhart reviewed the latest draft of the Annual Report. He again noted that the format is the same as in prior years. He noted that he was having difficulty obtaining an updated map but provided instead an inventory of units that contribute housing unit equivalency points toward a moratorium.

A motion was made, and duly seconded, to submit the report as presented to the Representative Town Meeting (RTM). The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Barnhart noted that the report will be presented and discussed at the RTM meeting of February 28th.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Goethner