

**Town of Fairfield  
Office of Community & Economic Development  
Affordable Housing Committee  
July 13, 2022**

The Affordable Housing Committee of the Town of Fairfield held a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, July 13, 2022 in the Second Floor Conference Room of the Old Town Hall Building. The meeting was also held via Zoom.

PRESENT: Steve Grathwohl, Chair; Joanne Csonka; Janice Bouloubasis; Nina Velez; Urb Leimkuhler

ALSO: Mark Barnhart, Director of Community and Economic Development

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.

### **Minutes**

A motion was made to accept the minutes of the regular meeting of June 8, 2022. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

### **Proposed Development: 15 Unquowa Road**

Mr. Barnhart reported that the public hearing on this application was continued until August 26, 2022.

### **Update on Plan of Conservation and Development**

Mr. Barnhart will invite TPZ staff and the planning consultants at FHI Studios to attend a future AHC meeting to discuss housing needs, priorities and goals as it relates to the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). He noted that the consultants had been provided a copy of the newly adopted Affordable Housing Plan and that housing remains a key topic of the Plan. Mr. Barnhart stated that the POCD update and Zoning Regulation re-write presents an opportunity to achieve some of the goals in the Town's Affordable Housing Plan.

### **Election of Officers**

Action on this item was deferred.

### **Affordable Housing Plan**

Mr. Grathwohl suggested that the Committee needs to focus on priorities and how best to advance the action steps in the Plan. He noted that while it was important to accumulate points to qualify for a moratorium per 8-30g, it was also important to diversify our housing stock and provide a broad range of housing options. He noted that many of the recommendations and goals required this Committee to work with other boards and commissions, such as the Town Plan & Zoning Commission. He suggested that the Committee examine ways to increase our set aside requirements and look at how best to use the Housing Trust Fund to encourage developers to create affordable units in Town.

Mr. Grathwohl asked for suggestions as to how to move ahead. Mr. Barnhart discussed resources that might help guide the discussion and establish some parameters for use of the Housing Trust Fund. He noted the high cost of land, and that the Town had used the HTF to provide land at little to no cost as a means to create affordable housing. Mr. Barnhart shared that he was having a summer intern do an analysis of parcels zoned for multi-family housing. Mr. Grathwohl stated that he would reach out to Glenn Chalder to see if he had any insights on how other communities handle. The Committee discussed inviting Carol Martin, Executive Director of the Fairfield Housing Authority, to attend a future meeting for a more in-depth conversation regarding opportunities and challenges in developing affordable housing in Fairfield.

Mr. Grathwohl asked what TPZ wants to work on in the next 6 months and how might the AHC be helpful in the process. Mr. Barnhart again noted that the POCD and Zoning regulation rewrite presented a unique opportunity to advance the Town's affordable housing goals, specifically as it relates to middle housing.

### **Discussion of Town Properties for Potential Affordable Housing Development**

Mr. Leimkuhler reported on his research to date and observed that there were very few obviously viable sites. He noted that he had focused on parcels with access to town water and sewer, and eliminated sites within a flood zone or other environmental constraints. He also had focused on sites that were at least 9000sf to constitute a conforming duplex building lot.

### **Old Business and Updates**

Mr. Barnhart reported on the following:

- The former Plant Factory site at 4185 Black Rock Turnpike, which had been approved for a 94-unit set aside development under 8-30g, was recently approved for a 25,000sf medical office use.
- A proposed 40-unit set aside development on Berkley Road, which is going before the Inland Wetlands Agency.
- The purchase of the Fairfield Metro Center site, with approved plans for a mixed use transit oriented development, for which the new owner is in the process of obtaining a building permit for the first 71-unit apartment building.
- Renewed interest and a possible sale of a 5-acre parcel at 81 Black Rock Turnpike for a future mixed use development; however, the parcel requires remediation
- The Town presently owns four lots within the Parkview Commons development, two of which have holdover tenants. Mr. Barnhart is preparing a request for qualifications for development partners to redevelop the site.
- A development agreement with Habitat for Humanity to construct two new duplexes (4 units) at 244 Greenfield Street is being finalized and will be presented to the Board of Selectmen for its review and approval.

- Mr. Barnhart had a conversation with Father Kulacz regarding the St. Emery's School property and the Town's interest in working with the Fairfield Housing Authority to redevelop the site for affordable housing.

Moratorium Status: No change

Housing Trust Fund: Mr. Barnhart reported that the balance is \$214,000, but several large deposits are pending; members expressed a desire to revisit and establish better guidelines for use of the Fund

### **New Business**

Mr. Barnhart noted that both universities were advancing plans for additional on-campus residence halls.

Mr. Grathwohl suggested that the AHC come up with an appropriate remembrance for Carrie Makover, a long serving and contributing member of the Committee who lost her battle with cancer recently.

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, September 14, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Goethner