

Town of Fairfield  
Office of Community & Economic Development  
Affordable Housing Committee  
December 14, 2022

The Affordable Housing Committee and the Town Plan & Zoning Commission of the Town of Fairfield held a special joint planning meeting on Wednesday, December 14, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. in the Conference Room at the Fairfield Board of Education offices located at 501 King's Highway in Fairfield. The meeting was also accessible via Webex.

PRESENT: Affordable Housing Committee members Steve Grathwohl; Urb Leimkuhler; Heather Dubrosky; Joanne Csonka; and Gwynne Alperovich.  
Town Plan & Zoning Commission members Tommy Noonan; Kathryn Braun; Meg Francis; Lenny Braman; Alexis Harrison and Tom Corsillo.

ALSO: Mark Barnhart, Director of Community and Economic Development; Adam Tecza, FHI Studios; Jim Wendt, Planning Director; Emmeline Harrigan, Assistant Planning Director.

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Wendt called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. Mr. Tecza of FHI Studios was introduced.

PRESENTATION BY ADAM TECZA OF FHI STUDIOS

Mr. Wendt prefaced Mr. Tecza's presentation with a summary of the Plan & Zoning Commission's work to date on the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD). These efforts included a series of public workshops that identified conservation and housing as critical issues requiring more in-depth study.

Mr. Tecza proceeded with a Power Point presentation, a link to which can be found here:

[https://fairfieldct.org/filestorage/10726/11028/12429/20922/2022.12.14 -  
\\_PZC Meeting - Housing v3.pdf](https://fairfieldct.org/filestorage/10726/11028/12429/20922/2022.12.14_-_PZC_Meeting_-_Housing_v3.pdf)

Mr. Tecza reviewed the results of an on-line survey, in which respondents listed Fairfield's strengths as: 1) parks and beaches; 2) people and culture; 3) quality schools; and 4) housing or neighborhood quality. The weaknesses polled as follows: 1) housing or neighborhood quality; 2) land use zoning; 3) affordability; 4) transportation.

Residents expressed a desire for diversity in the types of housing available concurrent with preserving the character of the existing neighborhoods. They would like to maintain

historic districts and legacy neighborhoods but also see a diversity of housing options to include development of housing in and around transit facilities.

Mr. Tecza reviewed opportunities to extend the center design district westward and to revise regulations consistent with the recommendations of the TOD study. Mr. Tecza also discussed opportunities where the Town might consider up-zoning to provide more housing options, particularly for smaller multi-family development. Similarly, he shared some initial thoughts on how the Town might modify its regulations to encourage missing middle housing and how the Town might better regulate character and form. He also noted areas prone to flooding where the Town might want to discourage housing.

Mr. Tecza noted that most areas of Town will remain unchanged through this process, but that there were strategic opportunities to revise the Town's zoning regulations to address community expectations and needs as to housing. He suggested that communities proceed gradually: to try things out and make incremental adjustments.

## DISCUSSION

Members of the Commission and the Committee raised some questions and made suggestions such as:

Were there any relevant patterns in the answers to the surveys? (i.e. did some demographic groups respond differently than others; Mr. Tecza will investigate this.)

Even with 8-30g developments, prices are not all that affordable.

It was noted by AHC members that overbuilt parking lots and municipal/non-profit properties could provide development opportunities for "affordable" and middle housing.

Courtyard/pocket housing was identified as a needed type of housing.

AHC studies indicate large numbers of existing non-conforming (e.g. < 9,000sf lots in Zone B) lots that seem consistent with the character of their neighborhoods. Consequently, there may be opportunities to adjust lot size and other requirements to facilitate more middle housing. AHC members were encouraged to submit such documentation to FHI (through TPZ Department).

Open space is very important.

The Town should consider ways in which it could offer exchanges/concessions to developers to encourage diversity of housing options.

The Town should consider development impacts in light of the projected sea level rise in the future.

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting of the Affordable Housing Committee is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, January 11, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Goethner