



New Partnership with Habitat for Humanity

Affordable Housing in Fairfield

Dear Fairfielders,

I am very pleased to announce we have officially broken ground on Fairfield's first affordable housing project with Habitat for Humanity. Community & Economic Development Director Mark Barnhart and I worked very hard to make this a reality and we look forward to providing four brand new affordable housing units in Fairfield.

This is one of many affordable housing proposals we are working on to create truly affordable housing that is under the Town's direction and doesn't use the antiquated 8-30g state law that has proven ineffective.

You can watch my remarks from the groundbreaking [here](#) and read the Fairfield Patch article on the project [here](#).





I share many residents' frustration with development projects made under 8-30g that do not have to conform to local zoning regulations and are completely out of scale with surrounding properties. In the last ten years, the Town Plan & Zoning Commission has considered 20 8-30g applications, including 12 that occurred within the past three years. State law allows municipalities to apply for and receive a temporary four-year moratorium, during which time the municipality is exempt from most affordable housing developments proposed under 8-30g.

The 8-30g statute, while well intentioned, is seriously flawed and in need of reform. I support the spirit of the statute for its efforts to create affordable housing. However, it's vital we provide a full range of housing options, including affordable housing for our young people, working families and senior populations.

We launched a FAQ to help residents understand the 8-30g law that you can [view here](#).

What's the solution?

I spent years as Ranking Member of the Housing Committee in the state legislature in an effort to achieve reform, but even the smallest rational changes were met with opposition. My concerns and common sense solutions are as follows:

1. ***The "one size fits all", ten-percent goal is unrealistic and unattainable for the majority of communities.***

Over thirty years since enactment, there has been little to no change in the number of communities that attained the 10% goal, proving its ineffectiveness. In Fairfield for example, with 21,648 dwelling units, 625 units (2.89%) meet the State's affordable housing criteria. To reach the 10% threshold, Fairfield would need to produce or newly deed restrict an additional 1,557 below market rate units, translating into an additional 5,190 units overall, based on the 30% set aside for 8-30g developments. That is clearly unattainable and unrealistic.

2. ***Communities should receive proper credit for the affordable housing units they developed regardless of when they were placed into service.***

CGS 8-30g provides temporary relief from unfavorable set aside developments in a moratorium, which communities can apply for, provided that they have been able to amass and document housing unit equivalency points (HUEP) equal to the greater of two percent (2%) of all dwelling units or seventy-five (75) HUEP.

In Fairfield's case, a moratorium would require 433 housing unit equivalency points. However, communities can only count affordable units constructed or newly deed restricted *after* 1990. Unfortunately, this threshold disadvantages communities like Fairfield that took an early leadership position in developing 200

affordable housing units prior to 1990.

Fairfield first adopted an Affordable Housing Plan in 1989, and worked creatively to address the issue of housing affordability. Additionally, the Town converted a former school, creating forty elderly housing units, partnered with several non-profits to create additional affordable housing opportunities, and provided tax abatements and/or pre-development financing to facilitate development.

None of these affordable housing developments—all of which are deed-restricted in perpetuity—count toward the Town's moratorium threshold only because they were built before the statute. That is irrational and must change.

3. Towns should not be discouraged from meeting the affordable housing needs of the growing elderly populations.

With people living longer than at any point in history and the advancing retirement age of Baby Boomers, communities need flexibility to respond to housing needs of their elderly populations. These efforts should be awarded one housing unit equivalency point as well.

4. There must be better incentives in place to encourage communities to work together and create affordable housing.

In Fairfield, we have made strides in developing affordable housing, including enacting inclusionary zoning, which requires that all developments of ten or more dwelling units set aside no less than ten percent of those units as affordable to residents with incomes at or below eighty percent of the area median income.

The Town has created a transit-oriented development overlay zone around the Fairfield Metro Center, allowing multi-story, mixed-use developments with residential densities of up to fifty bedrooms per acre with reduced parking requirements.

The Town established a Housing Trust Fund and enacted an inclusionary zoning fee on all new construction or building additions, which in three years has raised over \$1.5 million toward the creation and preservation of affordable housing units.

Fairfield is actively working to do its part, but I believe the State should create better incentives. Why not provide meaningful relief from set-aside developments under CGS 8-30g in exchange for the production of affordable units in incentive housing zones?

Further, why not encourage towns and cities to collaborate by establishing regional compacts that would apportion affordable housing units fairly and encourage development in suitable areas

and discourage greenfield development?

There is exigency for more affordable housing, but CGS 8-30g is not achieving its intended result, and needs common sense reform.

I look forward to identifying more opportunities in Town like the Habitat for Humanity project to create truly affordable housing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brenda". The signature is stylized with a large, flowing 'B' and a cursive 'L'.

First Selectwoman Brenda L. Kupchick

[Fairfield's 8-30g FAQ](#)