

Town of Fairfield
Office of Community & Economic Development
Affordable Housing Committee
January 11, 2023

The Affordable Housing Committee of the Town of Fairfield held a Special Meeting on Wednesday, January 11, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Second Floor Conference Room of the Old Town Hall. The meeting was also available via Zoom.

PRESENT: Steve Grathwohl; Urb Leimkuhler; Heather Dubrosky; Gwynne Alperovich; Joanne Csonka; Nina Velez; Janice Bouloubasis

ALSO: Mark Barnhart, Director of Community & Economic Development; Bob Elwanger, Fairfield Senior Advocates

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Grathwohl called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES: Consider & Act Upon the minutes of November 9, 2022 and December 14, 2022

The minutes of November 9, 2022 meeting were accepted unanimously. Approval of the minutes of the December 14, 2022, joint meeting was deferred pending revisions. Mr. Barnhart will make the requested changes and distribute a revised draft prior to the next meeting. Members were invited to send Mr. Barnhart any suggested changes.

2023 MEETING SCHEDULE

A suggestion was made to move the April 12, 2023 meeting to April 19, 2023 to avoid a potential conflict with Passover. The amended meeting schedule was unanimously approved.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Two members were nominated as Chair, Mr. Grathwohl and Ms. Czonka. The Committee decided to postpone the vote until Ms. Dubrosky joined the meeting. At that time, Mr. Grathwohl withdrew in favor of Ms. Csonka. Ms. Csonka was elected unanimously. Mr. Grathwohl was elected Vice Chair and Ms. Alperovich as Secretary.

ANNUAL REPORT

Mr. Barnhart distributed copies of the draft annual report. He noted that the format of the report remains unchanged from last year. He thanked Mr. Grathwohl for his help in supplying many of the statistics.

The report provides a brief summary of the Committee's work this past year, which chiefly revolved around developing an update to the Town's Affordable Housing Plan. Mr. Barnhart stated that he included a summary of the primary strategies of the newly adopted plan. He noted that the Committee is required to provide an annual update to the RTM on activity within the Housing Trust Fund and this report does so.

Mr. Leimkuhler asked about progress toward the moratorium under 8-30g. Mr. Barnhart noted that housing unit equivalency points are earned at the time of issuance of a certificate of occupancy. Properties in this program must be deed restricted for 40 years. Fairfield currently has 383.5 points and needs about 56 more points, although this number may be affected by the last census figures.

The Annual Report was accepted as presented.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN

Mr. Leimkuhler reported that he had sent the committee a list of goals as mentioned at the December 14th meeting. He suggested members examine the document and make suggestions as to how to 'work the plan.' Members were encouraged to submit other comments to Mr. Leimkuhler.

Mr. Grathwohl mentioned the need to expand the range of housing options as well as to increase the set aside percentage in some areas. Ms. Csonka noted the concept of courtyard housing as a potential for eco friendly developments.

Members noted that many of the goals outlined in the Plan will only be possible with the cooperation of the TPZ Commission.

OLD BUSINESS AND UPDATES

Mr. Barnhart provided the following updates:

- 244 Greenfield Street: the Board of Selectmen unanimously approved the ground lease for this property. Habitat for Humanity will be the developer of the four affordable home ownership units. The ground lease still requires the approval of the RTM.
- Parkview Commons Redevelopment: the foreclosure sale for this property has been stayed due to a bankruptcy filing. Mr. Barnhart indicated that he will continue to pursue and reach out to the owner to see if he is amenable to the Town purchasing the property.
- St. Emory's School: the FHA is again in discussion with the Diocese about purchasing this property.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Barnhart noted that new residence halls are under construction at both Fairfield University and Sacred Heart University. Projects such as these contribute to the Housing Trust Fund.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting of the Affordable Housing Committee is Wednesday, February 8, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Gretchen Goethner