

**Town of Fairfield**  
**Office of Community & Economic Development**  
**Affordable Housing Committee**  
**April 19, 2023**

The Affordable Housing Committee of the Town of Fairfield held its Regularly Scheduled Meeting on Wednesday, April 19, 2023 at 7:00 p.m., in the Second Floor Conference Room of the Old Town Hall Building. The meeting was also available on Zoom.

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

**ALSO:** Mark Barnhart, Director of Community and Economic Development; Bob Ellwanger

**CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Csonka called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**MINUTES:** Consider & Act Upon the Minutes of March 8, 2023

Mr. Leimkuhler noted a typo in the spelling of Ms. Harrigan's name. With that correction, the minutes were accepted unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS & UPDATES**

**Update on Set Aside Developments:** Mr. Barnhart reported that there was nothing new to report and that the moratorium status tracker remained unchanged. Mr. Grathwohl asked if the Committee could get a copy of the latest moratorium report, to which Mr. Barnhart responded that he would e-mail it to members.

**Housing Trust Fund:** Mr. Barnhart reported a balance in the Housing Trust Fund of \$852,429, of which \$350,000 had been reserved for Parkview Commons.

**Parkview Commons Redevelopment:** Mr. Barnhart provided a brief status update. He noted that the Town has acquired to date four properties, of which two have holdover tenants. He noted that the Town is interested in acquiring another unit which is in foreclosure and is expected to be sold at auction later this year.

**244 Greenfield Street:** Mr. Barnhart provided an update, noting that Habitat for Humanity intends to build two duplexes with all four units being deed restricted as affordable ownership housing to persons with incomes at or below 60%AMI. The town donated the property, and is ground-leasing it to Habitat, which will oversee construction. Mr. Barnhart hopes to schedule a ground-breaking this spring after Habitat secures its building permit. Ms. Csonka remarked that this event would be a good opportunity to highlight the work of the AHC which could be used for fund-raising and an education/awareness campaign.

**St. Emery's School/Convent:** Mr. Leimkuhler reported that the property is being administered by the Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport. Mr. Barnhart and Mr. Leimkuhler will try to get more information from the Diocese.

**501c33 designation:** Mr. Barnhart reported on his conversation with Attorney Richard DeMarco regarding the feasibility of establishing a 501c3. The Committee would need to establish a CT Non-Stock Corporation and file the requisite forms with the CT Secretary of State and IRS. The determination letter could take up to a year as there is a backlog, but that the decision would be retro-active. The attorney

didn't see any reason that the Board of the non-profit couldn't be identical to the membership of the AHC. Costs were estimated at \$5K, which included \$3500 for legal fees and \$1500 for filing fees and other expenses. Mr. Barnhart stated that he had not yet discussed this matter with the First Selectwoman or Town Attorney.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN

Mr. Leimkuhler referenced the priority goals and tracking sheet previously distributed. He shared a worksheet to help collect information and make comparisons of communities with inclusionary zoning provisions. He noted that he had developed a list of twelve towns that had some type of inclusionary zoning and had similar characteristics to Fairfield. He suggested that members pick a town or two to contact and to collect information on their inclusionary zoning regulations. He asked that members collect this information by next meeting.

Mr. Leimkuhler also reported on his findings to date related to "non-conforming" properties in the Residence B and C zones and whether there were opportunities to create more housing by providing greater flexibility with the Town's land use regulations. He noted that TPZ is examining relatively minor changes as part of the POCD process.

Mr. Grathwohl suggested that commissioners pick a town-owned property to assess its feasibility for redevelopment. Mr. Leimkuhler reported on his investigation to date of excess parking requirements, especially for large commercial properties, and whether there were opportunities to repurpose some of this land for housing.

Mr. Leimkuhler encouraged members to attend the upcoming TPZ open house workshop regarding the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD).

#### NEW BUSINESS

CDBG funding: Mr. Barnhart mentioned that there is a second public hearing scheduled for May 3 at 6:00 p.m. to hear requests for the use of these funds. The amount of federal funds available for this fiscal year is expected to be \$492, 327.

Consider and Act Upon Comments regarding proposed Berkeley Road Set Aside Development: Mr. Barnhart noted that TPZ will conduct a public hearing on this application for a proposed 40-unit development. He reported that he had reviewed the affordability plan and had only minor comments. He expressed concern that the administrator doesn't have any prior experience in overseeing compliance with 8-30g requirements. Mr. Barnhart indicated that he would be submitting comments along these lines to TPZ.

Mr. Grathwohl asked if there had been reaction from neighbors as the building would be two stories higher than anything else in the area. Mr. Barnhart reported that he was unaware of any specific comments to TPZ about the project, but that was the purpose of the public hearing.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 10, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Goethner