

**Town of Fairfield**  
**Office of Community & Economic Development**  
**Affordable Housing Committee**  
**October 12, 2022**

The Affordable Housing Committee of the Town of Fairfield held a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, October 12, 2022 in the Second Floor Conference Room of the Old Town Hall. The meeting was also available via Zoom.

PRESENT: Steve Grathwohl; Urb Leimkuhler; on Zoom: Heather Dubrosky; Janice Bouloubasis; Nina Velez; Gwynne Alperovic

ALSO: Mark Barnhart, Director of Community and Economic Development

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Grathwohl called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. He noted that due to the format of the meeting only members of the committee would be permitted to contribute.

MINUTES: Consider & Act Upon the minutes of October 12, 2022 Meeting

A motion was made by Mr. Leimkuhler and seconded by Ms. Dubrosky to accept the minutes of the regular meeting of October 12, 2022. The motion was unanimously accepted.

**Discussion of FCCHO Affordable Housing Plan Scorecard**

Mr. Barnhart reported on a recent workshop in which he participated that was sponsored by the Fairfield County Center for Housing Opportunities. He noted that the FCCHO had recently completed an evaluation of affordable housing plans submitted by Fairfield County communities and publicized its evaluation through issuance of “scorecards”. Fairfield ranked fourth highest in this evaluation after Stamford, Danbury and Bethel, in a tie with Westport. Mr. Grathwohl questioned some of the evaluation metrics and the points that were assigned to Fairfield. Mr. Barnhart responded that the Committee shouldn’t focus too much on the points. Mr. Barnhart argued that it was more important that our plan establish actionable goals by which Fairfield can make real progress toward meeting its housing needs as opposed to crafting a plan that scores well.

**ADU Workshop**

Mr. Grathwohl recognized and thanked Fairfield Senior Advocates for developing a new brochure on accessory dwelling units (ADUs), otherwise known as in-law apartments. He noted that the Committee in partnership with Fairfield Senior Advocates is planning a workshop on ADUs in mid-November. The workshop is tentatively planned for 7PM on November 15th or 16th and will feature a moderated panel discussion. Committee members are asked to suggest panelists for the workshop.

**Affordable Housing Plan**

Mr. Barnhart reported on his conversations with TPZ staff and the planning consultants from FHI Studios regarding the POCD update. He had extended on the Committee’s behalf an invitation to attend a future meeting of the AHC for a more in-depth discussion of housing-related goals, priorities and issues. Mr. Barnhart noted that the POCD update and zoning regulation re-write provides a unique opportunity to make progress in implementing some of the policy suggestions contained in the Affordable Housing Plan. The Committee discussed a supplemental scope of work with FHI to explore opportunities to create middle housing. Committee members expressed support for this work and discussed ways in which the Committee could participate such as providing examples of good design and housing typologies that might work well within neighborhoods. The Committee voiced support for funding this work from the Housing Trust Fund. It was noted that the scope of work and fee is not yet finalized.

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

Mr. Leimkuhler reported that his research to date revealed only a few Town lots that seem suitable candidates for the development of affordable housing. He has compiled maps and lists of possible sites, and suggested that committee members take an area of town and conduct site visits as part of the evaluation process. Mr. Barnhart suggested developing criteria and conducting a workshop for committee members so that everyone understood the criteria and how to evaluate each site. Committee members agreed that such a process would be helpful.

### **Old Business and Updates**

Parkview Commons: Mr. Barnhart reported on a pending foreclosure sale involving 376 Quincy Street, and recommended that the Committee consider purchasing the property with funds from the Housing Trust Fund. He noted that the property abuts two other parcels that the Town already controls and is large enough to accommodate a duplex (or triplex). Mr. Grathwohl asked how much money was in the Housing Trust Fund and Mr. Barnhart reported that there is \$628,135 in the Fund at present.

After discussion, a motion was made and unanimously approved to recommend to the Board of Selectmen the acquisition of 376 Quincy and to authorize up to \$350,000 from the HTF for its purchase. Mr. Barnhart noted that acquisition would also require a referral to Town Plan & Zoning under CGS 8-24 and approval from the Representative Town Meeting.

Moratorium Status: Committee members discussed increasing the affordable set aside requirement from 10% to 20%. Mr. Barnhart noted that we need to consider carefully the impact that this change might have on the financial feasibility of the project. He also expressed concern that we not set the bar so high so as to encourage developers to pursue 8-30g set aside developments instead. Mr. Barnhart argued that a higher set aside requirement should be looked at particularly in the transit oriented development overlay zones where the Town has permitted higher densities. Mr. Grathwohl volunteered to look at other communities, particularly nearby, to see what they are doing.

Mr. Grathwohl mentioned the proposed development at 980 High Street and noted that one of the Affordable Housing Plan's goals was to support efforts by the Fairfield Housing Authority to create affordable housing. He asked how the members feel about this project, which is back before the Inland Wetlands Agency. Several members voiced concerns about the scale of the proposed project and its potential impacts to surrounding properties, and reiterated their opposition to the project in its current form.

15 Unquowa Road: Mr. Barnhart provided a quick update noting that the application was denied, although he expects the applicant will appeal the decision.

Berkeley Road: Mr. Barnhart reported on a proposed 40-unit set aside development (CGS 8-30g) on Berkeley Road. It received Inland Wetlands approval, but still needs to come before the Town Plan & Zoning Commission for a public hearing.

Biro Street/St. Emery's: Mr. Barnhart reported that the FHA had resumed talks with the church regarding the potential acquisition of this property as other offers failed to materialize.

244 Greenfield Street: Mr. Barnhart reported that the Board of Selectmen has approved a development agreement with Habitat for Humanity and that the parties are negotiating a long-term ground lease for the property. Mr. Barnhart expects to present the ground lease for approval by Town Boards in December. He expects that construction will likely begin in the spring of 2023

The meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m. The next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, November 9, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Gretchen Goethner, Recording Secretary