

**Town of Fairfield
Office of Community & Economic Development
Affordable Housing Commission
September 22, 2010**

The Affordable Housing Commission of the Town of Fairfield held a meeting on September 22, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room in Old Town Hall.

PRESENT: Steve Grathwohl, Chair: Nan Jackson; Lisa Winjum; Mary Galgata

ALSO PRESENT: Mark Barnhart, Director, Office of Community and Economic Development; Elizabeth Gutierrez, Executive Director, Fairfield Housing Authority; Michael Gurge, HCV Administrator, Town of Fairfield; Sally Parker, TPZ Alternate; Rosemary Williams; Doug Defauw, Human Services Commission; Helen D'Avanzo

Distributions: Minutes from May 19, 2010; Fairfield Town Green report

Mr. Grathwohl called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Mr. Grathwohl welcomed Elizabeth Gutierrez, the new Executive Director of the Fairfield Housing Authority.

Cooperative Effort; FHA, AHC

Mr. Grathwohl mentioned that the Commerce Drive site offered some potential for affordable housing and suggested that perhaps the FHA could use its bonding ability to aid in the development of such housing. Ms. Gutierrez said the FHA does have the power to float bonds for this kind of project without TP&Z approval. Ms. Gutierrez said her office receives about 25 requests a day for affordable housing. She is working with Connecticut NAHRO and a landlord who is interested in developing 12 units. Currently, the FHA manages 30 units of federally funded, subsidized, elderly housing and 38 units of state, unsubsidized, housing and helps 75 families in town through the HCV program. Ms. Gutierrez said 171 people have been approved for HCVs but the available funds will not support the extra need Mr. Grathwohl asked when it would be appropriate to begin talking about floating bonds. Ms. Gutierrez said it would be beneficial to begin immediately so we are prepared to move when a site is available.

Mr. Grathwohl suggested that the two boards meet and work together toward the goal of providing more affordable housing in Fairfield.

Campfield Drive Proposal

Mr. Grathwohl said a proposal has been made for 50 Campfield Drive that would consist of two structures. There would be 12 units with 4 to be deemed affordable. Mr. Barnhart said there would be a public hearing on the proposal in mid-October. Mr. Grathwohl asked if city water and sewers were available for the site. Mr. Barnhart said they were. Ms. Gutierrez said the projected pricing would eliminate many FHA applicants: they would need more that help with a down payment. Mr. Barnhart said he has some available CDBG housing assistance funds that may be used in this instance. Mr. Grathwohl asked if the Capozziello development should be supported by the FHC. Mr. Barnhart said they have not asked for help and the matter could be considered at the October meeting.

Senior Housing Regulation Revisions

Mr. Grathwohl referred to section 10.6.9 of the Zoning regulations that indicates that no units in a multifamily development need to be "affordable." However, density bonuses have been given in the past for "senior housing." The regulations were changed for the units at Stone Ridge under this scenario. Mr. Grathwohl suggested that the AHC work to have this section removed and to work for an amendment at a later time that would specifically address the need for affordable units as a part of any multi-family development. Mr. Grathwohl and Mr. Barnhart will summarize their recommendations and present them to Joe Devonshuk and then prepare a plan to present their ideas to the TP&Z. A motion was made and carried to amend the Fairfield senior housing regulations to eliminate section 10.6.9. Mr. Barnhart said a proposal to increase the density bonus in section 10.6.10 might be an incentive to developers. Mr. Barnhart stressed the need for inclusionary zoning in Fairfield. He said the HomeCT legislation has not made an impression in this town.

Commerce Drive Zoning Study

Mr. Barnhart has the latest draft of the plan, and it is available on the town web site. Mr. Grathwohl said this represents the opportunity to create a neighborhood along with the commercial development.

Black Rock Train Station

Mr. Barnhart said construction of the station is proceeding ahead of schedule. The town and state are working on the parking lot, roadways and other infrastructure as well as remediation of the site. He expects work on these facets of the project to be finished by the end of 2011.

Southport Green

Mr. Grathwohl said there are still some units for sale and that the hotel has recently opened.

Other Business

Ms. Parker stressed the need to build a coalition to support more affordable housing in Fairfield. She suggested working with Operation Hope, the churches and the Human Services Department as well as with the FHA and other interested parties.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, October 20, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Goethner