

**Town of Fairfield
Office of Community & Economic Development
Affordable Housing Committee
Final Minutes of January 16, 2013**

The Affordable Housing Commission of the Town of Fairfield held a meeting on January 16, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in Roger Ludlowe Middle School.

PRESENT: Steve Grathwohl, Chair; Gerry Stuhlman; Dick Gribko

Also Present: Mark Barnhart, Director of Housing and Economic Development; Vincent Maiolo; Doug Prescott; John Welch; Bob Frigo; Cindy Sammarco; Deb Owen; Carol Martin; Sally Parker

Mr. Grathwohl called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Mr. Grathwohl opened the meeting by mentioning that 2013 marks the 25th anniversary of the Affordable Housing plan developed under the leadership of First Selectman Jacky Durrell. He suggested that attention to this issue has languished and that the need for such housing in our community is strong and growing. Mr. Grathwohl said there are several developments or potential developments that may present opportunities for including affordable units in the plans.

- 1) 185 Thorpe Street: proposed 65 units; needs a zone change
- 2) Metro Center/Black Rock Realty: 200 units (10% to be affordable); needs zoning change
- 3) Site adjacent to Bed Bath & Beyond

Meeting with Selectman Tetreau

Mr. Grathwohl said the AHC has a scheduled meeting with Mr. Tetreau on January 30. Mr. Stuhlman suggested drafting a letter asking the Selectman to actively support the addition of affordable housing as part of new development in Fairfield. He will draft a letter and submit it to the AHC for comment. Ms. Parker stressed the need for overlay zones such as exist for the Commerce Drive area as an effective method of adding affordable housing. She said these could be proposed by any resident and presented to the P & Z for consideration. Ms. Martin said that without more diversity of housing in town, Fairfield would eventually have no middle class. She said it is necessary to educate residents as to the need and value of having affordable housing available here. This needs to be done in a pre-application effort.

Mr. Grathwohl asked the meeting participants to submit questions to him that would be used in the meeting with Mr. Tetreau.

8-30g State Regulation

Mr. Maiolo reported on a meeting he attended January 12 that included Fairfield's state senator and representatives. Among the topics covered was the application of 8-30g in local communities. In response to questions about potential legislative action on this issue, the legislators indicated they have been working on legislation that would require towns to have detailed plans in place for adding affordable housing to their communities. There will be a public hearing on the issue in February.

Osprey Landing/Thorpe Street

Mr. Prescott asked what kind of control the town has over development proposals such as this. Mr. Barnhart said there are limited tools available. Ms. Parker said that if an application meets the regulations, the P & Z must approve changes. In the case of Thorpe Street, it is unrealistic to expect that it will be used as an industrial site in the future. Mr. Barnhart stressed the need for a community dialogue on the subject of affordable housing in order to update the Town Plan. Mr. Grathwohl said it was important to reach out to the land use attorneys who work on these developments.

CDBG

Mr. Barnhart said he would keep the Commissioners apprised of public hearings about the use of the CDBG funds the town will receive. He expects some fund allocations from the state.

Storm 'Sandy' Update

Mr. Frigo suggested that it would be important for Mr. Tetreau to have statistics as to the number of phone calls received by the FHA and Mr. Barnhart's office requesting permanent or temporary housing after the storm. Ms. Martin and Mr. Barnhart said they had many call a day asking for help. Mr. Stuhlman said a mail deliverer in the beach area said he had 166 families on his route who were displaced. Ms. Owen said she had tried to get RTM members to reach out to affected residents, with little success. Mr. Barnhart suggested the need for a 'brown bag' luncheon to bring together residents, P & Z staff and commission, the building department and others involved with storm damage and rebuilding.

AHC Annual Report

Mr. Grathwohl said this report would be available soon. It will be presented to the AHC and the RTM.

Whole Foods/LEED Certification

Mr. Grathwohl said the Whole Foods facility in Fairfield has been recognized as LEED Certified.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be Wednesday, February 20, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Goethner