

Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Housing Committee
January 8, 2024
7PM, First Selectmen's Conference Room, 11 Meetinghouse Lane

Attending: Mary Dean, Chris Dickerson, Elaine Feldman, Jim Graham, Kathy Hunter, Donavon Lofters, Warner Marshall, Lew Shaffer. Guests: Attorneys Gerarde, Hannah Guzzo and Ira Bloom

A quorum is present

Meeting called to order at 7:05 by Kathy Kunter, Chair

1. Executive Session to discuss strategy and negotiations regarding pending litigation, OPEN COMMUNITIES TRUST, LLC Et Al v. TOWN PLAN & ZONING COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE Et Al, Docket Number HHD-CV22-6166209-S

Motion by Kathy to go into Executive Session was seconded by Jim and passed unanimously. The attorneys were invited into the Executive Session.

At the conclusion of the discussion, on a motion Kathy seconded by Mary, the committee voted unanimously to return to public session.

2. Approval December 4, 2024, Minutes The minutes were unanimously approved for posting on a motion by Elaine seconded by Lew.

3. Public Comment: none

4. Housing Chair Report

In response to a request by the BOS for an update on the Affordable Housing Plan, Kathy spoke with the BOS earlier this evening at their regularly scheduled meeting. We had recommended to them last June that it be amended to clarify the meaning of wording related to a “10% requirement”. The amendment also included some wording from the state’s updated Zoning Enabling Act. Members of the BOS expressed concern that we did not address all the issues that were communicated to us in comments, such as town and elementary school population figures. Kathy explained that the data related to demographics will be updated with information now being gathered for the POCD. The BOS is interested in conducting a community session to seek input into proposed updates for the Affordable Housing Plan. Kathy asked that committee members review the plan to see if there any areas that can benefit from updating to be discussed at the February meeting.

As planned, we did submit our recommendation for housing goals for the POCD on December 19, and Kris Sullivan confirmed receipt and has sent it to the consultants (SLR). They have a meeting scheduled and we are asked to save January 29th; a more precise time for this committee not known yet. Jim expressed the idea that having a meeting with all the other groups would be valuable. Kathy doesn’t anticipate that there will a draft of the POCD by that date.

Kathy met with the TAC. The group met in person; the planned site walk was cancelled on account of weather. When asked what other stakeholders should be contacted, Kathy suggested to the consultants to engage with groups who represent folks that are not represented at the table. This

includes those who do not have the time or resources to commit to volunteering their time such as people who are most impacted by the lack of affordable housing. She recommended that the TAC consultants reach out to "All In" and CONECT.

There will be a YIMBY Convention in New Haven this autumn.

A SCRCOG meeting with towns reporting on their Community Conversations is upcoming. Elaine is going, possibly Lew, and Mica.

5. Workplan for 2025: Suggestions:

Kathy suggests that we do more to educate the public about affordable housing, to address complaints that it is not understood. Suggestions:

- Perhaps a poster of "A Simple Explanation of Affordable Housing"?
- Donavon wonders if a Facebook Forum would be useful, or the Youtube channel.

Kathy also suggested that there was a good webinar that took place at the Partnership for Strong Communities 2024 Housing Conference that addressed how Affordable Housing and Conservation could work together. Suggested putting this video on the website.

The Committee also decided to do a public information session: location at the Library meeting room was preferred. Kathy will seek out speakers.

6. Furthering Community Conversations

Lew reported on a community conversation that was held and the plan is to start doing 1 on 1s with people; they have had training to do this. He and Elaine shared their power mapping exercise, which helped them understand the value of community organization and one on one work. The idea is to talk about all community issues, but housing is connected to it all.

Lew also reported that the United Way is still trying to get updated information about 211 calls. Also need to follow up with Cathy Austin about local data as available from the Human Services case management system.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m. (Motion by Lew, second by Jim)