

Lyme Affordable Housing Commission Meeting August 3, 2020

This meeting was conducted via ZOOM. Electronically present: Tim Hildner (Chair), Christine Darnell, Carol House, Steve Mattson, Isabelle Roberge and Tina West.

The minutes of the July 6 meeting were accepted as published.

Hildner introduced two visitors: Joe Fitzgerald (Lyme citizen), Brendon Crowley (journalist from the CT Examiner).

Old Business:

Review of current units / monthly land lease fees: Mattson stated that all homeowners are up to date and suggested a two-year cycle to review/confirm incomes in relationship to fees.

Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals List 2019: Hildner spoke with Laura Watson at the CT Department of Housing and confirmed that the drop in Lyme's Tenant Rental Assistance count was wholly related to residents relocating to other towns.

Affordable Housing Rental Model: The Commission reviewed the status of the Commission's ongoing discussions with the Lyme Zoning Officer and the Chair of the P & Z Commission regarding state statutes and Lyme zoning regulations related to designated accessory apartments as affordable rental units. Given other issues that are before the P & Z, Mattson indicated that it may be 4-8 months before we finalize our work with them on these regulation changes. In addition, the ongoing process of understanding market rental rates in Lyme and comparing them to rates under affordable housing regulations was discussed. We are working with Lyme's Assessor to get a better understanding of the properties with ancillary apartments. We want to devise a model formula that will make sense for the town across a variety of properties.

New Business:

Outreach to broader community: Hildner and House met with representatives (Tony Lyons and Loretta McCluskey) of HOPE Partnership, a non-profit organization dedicated to developing affordable workforce housing opportunities in Southern Middlesex County. Their projects include Ferry Crossing in Old Saybrook and The Lofts at Spencer's Corner in Essex. These are rental properties, and they use a rental management company to manage them after they are built. We shared information and discussed their successes and barriers. Mattson asked for more information about the rental management company. Hildner plans to set up another meeting with Lyons

to discuss funding sources. Hildner also plans to set up a meeting with Habitat for Humanity.

Essex has put together an Affordable Housing Plan for their town. We have been offered a copy to review and see its potential relevance for Lyme.

Other:

There was a discussion of the Young property. In earlier work, we determined that it would take at least \$60,000 to build a septic and prepare the property for building. It was reiterated that, by deed, the town can use this land only for affordable housing. The relative merit of a duplex, given the site development costs, was noted. Hildner reported out on a preliminary discussion with Lyme's Zoning Enforcement Officer about the zoning issues related to a duplex. There was also a short discussion about the costs to determine whether the land and septic would accommodate a possible duplex. We will continue to talk about a path to move forward towards a final disposition of this property over the next year.

The Commission has made a good transition of its leadership. Many thanks to Roberge and Hildner.

Hildner adjourned the meeting at 6:01 pm.

Next meeting: September 14 at 5 pm. This will be a Zoom meeting.

Respectively submitted,
Carol House