

Lyme Affordable Housing Commission Meeting December 7, 2020

This meeting was conducted via ZOOM. Electronically present: Tim Hildner (Chair), Carol House, and Steve Mattson.

Visitors: Jim Miller and Carleen Gerber

Hildner called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

The minutes of the November 9 meeting were accepted as posted.

Old Business:

Changes to Commission Membership: Christine Darnell submitted a letter of resignation. We thank Christine for her work on the Commission. Hildner presented the names of Jim Miller and Carleen Gerber to the Board of Selectmen through Mattson, requesting their appointment to the Commission.

AHC Submission for the Lyme Annual Town Report: Hildner submitted the Commission's report to Marsha Orzech, who compiles the individual commissions' reports into the annual town report.

AHC Meeting Schedule for 2021: Hildner presented a proposed schedule of meeting dates for 2021. The Commission approved this schedule and Hildner will officially submit it to the Town clerk. The Commission will continue to meet on the first Monday of each month, except for January, July, August, and September when we will meet on the second Monday. The meetings will continue to begin at 5 p.m. on Zoom until further notice.

Public Education Initiative: The Commission discussed a proposed online educational quiz that would be used to help remove misperceptions among Lyme residents about affordable housing and its potential impact on Lyme. The Commission plans to use the information learned through the quiz to develop additional educational activities to promote affordable housing in general and specific affordable housing initiatives. The quiz would be similar to the weekly news quiz in the New York Times, allowing individuals to test their knowledge of affordable housing. The quiz would be offered online and consist of approximately 10 questions with multiple choice answers. In addition to finalizing quiz questions and a budget, House and Hildner will follow up with John Kiker to discuss the feasibility of posting a link for the quiz on the Town website. In addition to the quiz, the Commission also discussed the possibility of developing a formal survey in conjunction with the Commission's future work on the Lyme Affordable Housing Plan.

Affordable Housing Rental Model: The Commission has developed several formulas by which the Town could provide support to homeowners who

enroll their rentals into an affordable housing program. Each formula has pros and cons. The Commission wants input from homeowners as we move forward. It reviewed a draft letter that will be sent to homeowners identified by the Lyme Assessor as having an accessory structure. The letter briefly describes the proposed program and offers these homeowners an opportunity to express interest in such a program and join with the Commission to discuss the details. Hildner will follow up on finalizing the form of the letter and developing a mailing budget.

Ruth Young Property: There has been renewed interest in moving forward with developing this property for an affordable unit. The Town's counselor is reviewing the associated documents, with a plan to get back to the Commission with comments in January.

Affordable Housing Plan: Lyme is required by state statute to have an official Affordable Housing Plan. This Commission will have the lead role in the drafting of this plan. We will be working with the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG) to fit our plan within a regional plan. Hildner has reached out to Mary Stone, Lyme's representative on the RiverCOG, to begin this work. This collaboration will reinforce a regional approach to affordable housing. The Commission also briefly discussed current initiatives in the State General Assembly to amend statutes pertaining to land use and affordable housing. Commission members were referred to a YouTube video of a December 1st Town Hall meeting held by Senator Tony Hwang in which these initiatives are discussed.

New Business:

Sustainable Lyme Committee: Sustainable Connecticut is a voluntary state certification program to recognize thriving and resilient Connecticut municipalities. The Town is forming a Sustainable Lyme Committee that will be working on the local activities associated with this state initiative. The Sustainable Lyme Committee will be coordinating and working with our Commission on topics related to affordable housing.

Other: There was a discussion of our 5:00 pm meeting time. When we begin to once again meet in person, we may decide to meet later in the evening. If we change meeting time, we will need to work around potential conflicts with other Town commissions.

Hildner adjourned the meeting at 6:03 pm.

Next meeting: Monday January 7 at 5 pm. This will be a Zoom meeting.

Respectively submitted,
Carol House