

## **Lyme Affordable Housing Commission Meeting January 11, 2021**

This meeting was conducted via ZOOM. Electronically present: Tim Hildner (Chair), Carleen Gerber, Carol House, Steve Mattson, Jim Miller, Isabel Roberge, and Tina West.

Hildner called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm.

The minutes of the December 7 meeting were accepted as posted.

### Old Business:

*Changes to Commission Membership:* Carleen Gerber and Jim Miller have officially joined the Commission. Welcome! Ron Tooker is currently in discussions to join the Commission. The State's Affordable Housing Commission Guidebook recommends having a diverse membership, including members from population groups that could benefit from this program. For example, one member was an early beneficiary of affordable housing. Members suggested we should look to add a teacher and someone associated with first responders.

*AHC Meeting Schedule for 2021:* Hildner officially submitted our meeting schedule for 2021 to the Town clerk on Tuesday December 8, and receipt was confirmed by the 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. We continue to discuss the 5 pm timing of the meetings, which is inconvenient for some potential members. At this point the meetings will continue to begin at 5 p.m. on Zoom.

*Public Education Initiative:* The Commission discussed a draft online educational quiz that will 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 draft quiz consists of five questions with multiple choice answers. Commission members approved the questions on the draft quiz and recommended adding an open-ended question at the end where people could enter comments and/or questions. Our thanks to John Kiker for help with access to SurveyMonkey software. Hildner plans to work with Kiker to develop a marketing plan to alert people to the quiz. Other actions planned: we will create a unique email address for the Commission; we will begin posting links on our website to documents and articles that will help people keep abreast with what is happening in affordable housing in Connecticut.

*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, therefore we have prepared a 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. The estimated printing and mailing costs are within the Commission's budget and Mattson approved this expenditure. Commission members suggested the use of email for homeowner responses to the letter rather than returning a postcard. Hildner will touch base with our town zoning officer about the status of our proposed regulation changes needed in support of this program.

*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.

*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.

New Business:

*Contribution to Affordable Housing Fund:* Our thanks to Sue Hessel and Karen Dahle for contributing to this fund.

*Fund Raising* – We will carry over this topic to next month's meeting.

*Other:* Miller stated that he has written an Op-Ed that appears in the CT Mirror this week, asking the State Legislature to revise its definition of Affordable Housing to reflect the actual cost of housing alternatives, by eliminating the requirement that it be built after 1990 and eliminating the deed restriction requirement

Hildner adjourned the meeting at 6:24 pm.

Next meeting: Monday February 1 at 5 pm. This will be a Zoom meeting.

Respectively submitted,  
Carol House