

## **Lyme Affordable Housing Commission Meeting May 3, 2021**

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

Hildner called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm.

The minutes of the April 5 meeting were accepted as posted.

### Old Business:

#### *Affordable Housing Bills in Legislature*

The legislature is currently in session, so changes are happening, and it is difficult to get in touch with members to discuss those changes. Therefore, we were unable to ascertain the status of various bills.

*Public Education Initiative:* Miller is still working to learn more about various parcels of land in Lyme that we have identified vacant and buildable.

We need to develop a Marketing Plan to help residents better understand the value of having more affordable housing in Lyme. We need to focus on the benefits to the town and residents of Lyme. We can leverage work being done by Sustainable Lyme. The audience of the plan will be the residents of Lyme, answering the question of why residents should support affordable housing. Olstein said that we need to put a face of the people who will directly benefit, such as volunteers for fire and ambulance, teachers getting started in their career, and older residents who are looking to downsize. The need appears to be greatest for rental property. Such property will turn over more quickly than purchased homes, making room for additional families that need an affordable place to live. We need to look for private funding and grants, as well as how affordable housing needs can be combined with open space needs as the town considers buying available land. We should be aware that senior housing has additional state requirements.

Olstein and Hildner have drafted a survey to be sent to individuals who may potentially be interested in affordable housing in Lyme. These include current volunteers with Lyme fire and ambulance, educators, and town employees. The purpose of the survey is to paint a picture of need by determining whether they currently live in Lyme, would like to live in Lyme, their stage in life, and what kind of housing they may need in both the in short and longer term. We will have further discussion of this survey at the June meeting.

*Affordable Housing Rental Model:* We understand that bill SP1024, if approved and signed into law, would require 10-year deed restrictions on accessory

apartments instead of 1-year deed restrictions. This will effectively make our rental model unattainable.

*Affordable Housing Plan:* A draft RiverCOG regional plan for conservation and development is out for public comment. We can draw on some of the background work they have done as we pull together our required Affordable Housing Plan. For example, this regional plan mentions that Lyme has highest or second highest median age of residents, the least variety in type of housing, and the highest median home value. This draft plan also states that 51% of renters are cost burdened (i.e. spend greater than 30% of household income on housing.)

*Affordable Housing-Immediate Needs:* We continued to explore options of helping one Lyme volunteer in a search housing in or near town.

New Business:

*Structure of Future Meetings:* The Town is opening its meeting space to commission meetings, and we discussed whether we want to begin in person meetings or stick with zoom. The decision was to continue with zoom for the June meeting, and look at a hybrid approach starting in July.

*Other:* Nothing additional was discussed.

Hildner adjourned the meeting at 7:36 pm.

Next meeting: Monday June 7 at 6:30 pm. This will be a Zoom meeting.

Respectively submitted,  
Carol House