

Lyme Affordable Housing Commission Meeting June 7, 2021

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

Visitor: Phyllis Ross

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

The minutes of the May 3 meeting were accepted as posted.

Old Business:

Format 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 Town Hall is currently available for our dates and times. We decided to change to a hybrid meeting. The hybrid would include gathering in-person but having a zoom entry available as well. This will require bringing a computer to each meeting and hosting a zoom meeting from the in-person meeting, adjusting the computer to capture, as much as possible, the people in the room. We will be required to record the meeting on zoom.

Affordable Housing Bills in Legislature: It is our understanding that legislative bill #6107 has been sent governor's desk for signing. We await further information.

Public Education Initiative: Miller and Gerber are working to learn more about various parcels of land in Lyme that we have identified vacant and buildable. No additional action to date.

We propose developing a Marketing Plan to help residents better understand the value of having more affordable housing in Lyme. To gain support we need to focus on the benefits to the town and residents of Lyme. We reviewed the draft survey developed by Olstein and Hildner. We plan to send it 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 and use that information in the Marketing Plan and in our future push to bring affordable housing to Lyme. There was a discussion of how refugee families can bring value and diversity to Lyme. We also talked about the need for affordable housing for older residents in Lyme who may need to move into smaller places but have little or no choice within our town. West talked briefly about contacts she has had with others outside of Lyme who are working on affordable housing. We need to reach out to these people once we have some basics organized in our plan.

West agreed to draft a first version of a plan from which we can work.

Affordable Housing Rental Model: The new 10-year (instead of 1-year) deed restrictions on renting accessory apartments under state regulations for affordable housing will effectively make our rental model unattainable. We will drop this topic from the agenda until something changes in the future to make this approach more productive.

Affordable Housing Plan: Hildner recommended that we need to create a broad-based working group to develop this plan. This group would include individuals from many groups in the community, such as various formal commissions, women's groups, ambulance and fire companies, open space advocates, church, school, etc. Hildner will develop a list of organizations and asks us to identify names of potential working group members from those organizations. Hildner also recommends that we look online at the Town of Salisbury – 3600 people –for their affordable housing plan.

We are unsure yet when our plan needs approval, and by whom.

New Business:

No new business was discussed.

Hildner adjourned the meeting at 8:11 pm.

Next meeting: Monday July 12 at 6:30 pm. This will be a hybrid meeting with in-person and also zoom meeting.

Respectively submitted,
Carol House