

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING STEERING COMMITTEE
AMENDED MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, MAY 26, 2021**

The Glastonbury Affordable Housing Steering Committee held a Meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 26, 2021 at the Riverfront Community Center, 300 Welles Street.

Committee Members:

Deborah Carroll - Town Council
Lillian Tanski - Town Council
Sharon Purtill - Town Plan & Zoning Commission
Christopher Griffin - Town Plan & Zoning Commission
Neil Griffin - Executive Director, Housing Authority
Carl Stenman - Housing Authority
Nick Paindiris - Community Member
Patty Parent - Community Member
Richard Johnson - Town Manager
Rebecca Augur - Director of Planning & Land Use Services
Jonathan E. Mullen, AICP - Planner

Others present:

Glenn Chalder - Consultant - Planimetrics

1. Roll Call *All present*

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Augur at 6:03 p.m.

- a. Pledge of Allegiance. Led by Town Manager Johnson.

2. Public Communication and Petitions pertaining to the Call

Pam Lucas of 145 Moseley Terrace, is a 30+ year resident of Glastonbury and a member of Truth in Action with Love and Kindness (TALK), which has hosted a variety of housing events for residents to address economic racism. She called for the steering committee to view their mission with an eye toward eliminating zoning barriers, expanding the range of affordable housing for current and future residents, and conveying to everyone that Glastonbury is a welcoming community.

Anne Bowman of 62 Morgan Drive, supports creating a plan with zoning changes to allow more affordable housing in Glastonbury. She stated that there is a lack of good affordable housing in the state as a whole and Glastonbury is no exception. Studies have shown that affordable housing is a net benefit for communities, and there is no relationship with elevated crime levels or reduction in achievement at nearby schools.

3. Special Business as contained in the Call.

a. Preliminary housing needs analysis

Ms. Augur reviewed Glastonbury's demographics and housing inventory as compared to the state. She pointed out that while there is a stock of "naturally occurring affordable housing" in town, there is no guarantee that lower income households are able to take advantage of this stock, so there may be mismatches between housing types and household needs. While the housing stock reflects the agricultural and suburban roots of Glastonbury, there are a significant number of townhome and condo style developments which are moderately priced. Nevertheless, current housing supply might not be meeting the needs of everyone who wants to live in Glastonbury or the elderly or disabled. The next steps would be to analyze the regulations, land use in the community, and the barriers and opportunities for creating more affordable housing.

During the presentation, members of the Steering Committee made comments and asked questions as follows:

Ms. Purtill noted that 36% of units in town could qualify as affordable housing, but only 6% are protected with a guarantee that they be occupied by low-income residents. She then asked to determine the number of apartments that get reported as single-family homes. Ms. Augur stated that they are doing their best to track that information, but not all are reflected in the assessor's data. Ms. Purtill stated that there must be a way to come up with those records because they have many of those smaller units in town, so for discussion purposes, it is important information to know.

Ms. Tanski asked if there is a way to capture incomes with the age of households and the cost of the homes they occupy. Mr. Chalder stated that they could do a Public Use Microdata Sample to create a matrix based on the range of incomes versus the cost of housing. That would give them a sense of what is going on, but it is not a perfect indicator because Glastonbury's information is included there with other towns. The 2020 census data has not yet been released, and they are still trying to figure out what the data shows for today instead of estimates.

Ms. Carroll asked about the attrition rate for Glastonbury Housing Authority (GHA) properties. Executive Director of the GHA, Neil Griffin, stated that it is scattered. In a normal year, it is about 3-7%, but this past year, there were almost none. Ms. Carroll asked about the median amount of time that people are on the waiting list. Mr. Griffin replied that, because of the way they make their lists, there is no way of knowing. They conservatively inform participants to expect to wait up to 18 months, but there is no average. Ms. Carroll asked how frequently an offer is accepted, once their turn is reached. Mr. Griffin stated that they are tracking that data on the elderly level, but it is completely different for the family group. Ms. Carroll asked how Glastonbury's wait time compares to other towns. Mr. Griffin noted that Glastonbury is similar to other towns, such as Norwich and Wethersfield.

b. Draft community survey review

Glenn Chalder from Planimetrics noted that they have drafted up a survey to be released to the public for their input on how to engage the community and learn about which issues are important to residents and those who would like to become residents. The survey is **will be** online, on SurveyMonkey, and would be open for a period of about 3-6 weeks to collect feedback. They have rolled out hundreds of surveys like this in the past. As it stands, the survey is 21 questions, with both open-ended and close-ended responses. The average survey time is about 10-11 minutes. The purpose is to get good feedback so that the data gives the steering committee useful direction moving forward.

The Steering Committee reviewed each question in the draft survey, and made a series of comments, questions, and suggestions, as follows:

Ms. Mr. Paindiris asked if this is a skewed process because some residents do not have access to computers. Mr. Chalder suggested the senior center as a place for those who do not have computers to fill out paper copies of the survey. He noted that the first question in the survey is “how did you hear about the survey.” The survey is often set up to get one response per IP address, which should limit multiple responses. Social media, press, community TV, and word of mouth will be used as methods to promote the survey around town. Social media and word of mouth are most effective these days.

Mr. Paindiris asked if there is a particular number of responses they are looking for. Mr. Chalder stated that it depends. Their goal is to get as broad, diverse participation as they can. He explained that the other methodology they considered was a telephone survey, but it was considerably costlier. This study will be a qualitative benefit, rather than a quantitative one.

Mr. Stenman provided corrections to be made regarding language, such as fixing the name of the committee to read, “The Affordable Housing Steering Committee.” He also suggested incorporating some definitions in the preamble so that the people filling out the survey could understand those words. Mr. Chalder countered that listing definitions in the beginning could turn away potential participants. Instead, he suggested providing definitions to words as they come up in the question. Ms. Purtill added that they should give references so that people know what they are talking about.

There was a discussion about how to identify areas of Glastonbury that survey participants would easily understand. Mr. Chalder identified six areas and provided a map. Ms. Purtill noted that most people say that they are from one of three areas: the north of town, South Glastonbury, or east by the Manchester side. Ms. Tanski added that the map is really important for people who did not grow up in town to understand how they identify themselves within town. Mr. Johnson suggested putting in the main streets on the map, such as Hebron Avenue and the Route 2 area.

The Steering Committee discussed the topic of perception as it relates to several of the questions in the draft survey. Mr. Paindiris likes the idea of asking the questions in such a way to find out which biases are out there presently. Ms. Tanski agreed, stating that it is important to see what is in people’s heads right now. Ms. Carroll asked if a definition of low income will be provided, or

if the intent is to just gauge perception, rather than an informed thought. She would like to know what people think qualify as low income. Ms. Parent added that the perception issue is critical because people will have a different approach to answering a question about affordable housing for low-income families versus for the elderly.

There was a discussion on phraseology of questions. Ms. Tanski is very interested in the mythical income question, which they should investigate before asking about housing needs. Mr. Chalder stated that they are not trying to mislead people, so perhaps a housing allowance rather than a presumption of sale price would be better language. **Mr. Stenman suggested deleting any items denoting “character,” since there are implications and undertones of racism.** Mr. Chalder asked to move away from character and ask whether participants find design to be important. Mr. Paindiris suggested changing language on the housing permits question. He also stated that a “Prefer not to answer” option should be added for question #17 on codified segregation because some people may find it offensive. Ms. Carroll agreed with the suggestion but thinks that the question is a very helpful one. Ms. Tanski concurred, stating that they could project out what Glastonbury’s future needs might be.

After reviewing the questions at length, Mr. Chalder explained the next steps. He will review the questions again and try to simplify the language. An updated copy of the survey will be provided to the steering committee next week. Ms. Purtill believes that a summer roll out is not a good time to acquire enough viable feedback. She suggested holding off until schools start in the fall. The steering committee agreed to review the updated survey at their meeting next month, with the intent to deploy the survey in September. Mr. Johnson pointed out that the Town does not have a SurveyMonkey account. Mr. Chalder will share the data, but an account would need to be created on the Town’s end.

Mr. Chalder will write an article to send out to local papers, informing the public about the steering committee and that the survey will be deployed in September. Mr. Paindiris suggested guest speakers come in to speak at future meetings, to get a sense of what other towns have done and what they should expect. The rest of the committee liked the idea, and Mr. Chalder agreed to look into it.

c. Other topics and discussion

No further discussion.

4. Adjournment

With no further business to come before the Steering Committee, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m. The next meeting will be on June 23 at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lilly Torosyan

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Recording Clerk