

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING STEERING COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2021**

The Glastonbury Affordable Housing Steering Committee held a Meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 25, 2021 in the Council Chambers of Town Hall at 2155 Main Street.

**Committee Members:**

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

**Others present:**

Glenn Chalder - Consultant - Planimetrics

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**1. Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Augur at 6:05 p.m.

a. Pledge of Allegiance Led by Ms. Augur

**2. Minutes of July 28, 2021 Meeting**

There were no comments on the minutes.

**3. Public Communication and Petitions**

*Sara Bass of 5 Knollwood Drive*, does not yet know whether she is in favor of affordable housing or not. She is interested in knowing what is going on and would like to learn more. She tried to complete the initial survey, but because of its length, gave up halfway through. She is glad there is another one going out. She asked a series of questions, including the following:

- Is the State mandating affordable housing?
- If so, what are the repercussions if Glastonbury does not fulfill that mandate?
- Will taxes in town be impacted by this?
- Will Town-owned land be given up for affordable housing?

**Mark Sheridan of 28 Cutter Lane**, thanked committee members for their service. He asked, who will get the affordable housing that they decide to build? He stated that people in Glastonbury will prefer some groups over others. There are big differences between giving priorities to veterans or families with school-aged children versus holding a lottery versus homeless people. He asked the committee to give space to the community to understand how this allocation might happen.

**Pamela Lucas of 145 Moseley Terrace**, had comments on the documents presented for tonight's meeting. It is essential that the Town take into consideration not only the housing needs of current Glastonbury residents, but also the region's low- and moderate-income housing residents. She asked that the survey revise some of its wording, such as removing the word "character" (in Question 10, Item H) to describe the town, as it is loaded and inappropriate terminology, as well as the revising the wording on public water and sewer (Question 10, Item L), which she feels directs the answer.

**Lynn Avitabile of 28 Cutter Lane**, stated that, depending on how the committee decides to allocate these houses, additional support and services could potentially be required. For instance, increasing ESOL teachers at schools. Right now, the discussion is all about housing, which is just the tip of the iceberg. She thinks that the community can financially afford these things, but her concern is with what else must happen for this to become successful. The community is uninformed on this issue. She asked that the committee think through the implications and makes them clear to the community, so that people can be better informed.

**Roger Maldonado, staff attorney at Open Communities Alliance (OCA) in Hartford**, explained that their non-profit organization is dedicated to eradicating racial segregation through housing policy. Their organization reviewed several impediments to affordable housing in Glastonbury in their 2021 Equity Report, which they recommend that the committee reads. He stated that Glastonbury must provide for more affordable housing by expanding their Section 8-30G units, of which more than half are reserved for elderly households, to other groups. There is also a profound need to reach deeper on affordability. He stated that the OCA would be happy to discuss housing strategies with the committee.

**Pam Lockard of 10 Southgate Drive**, would love to see more affordable housing and diversity in Glastonbury. When she lived in Manchester, she had tenants, and her best tenants were on Section 8. She asked that, whatever plan the committee decides on, that affordable housing be scattered throughout town so that everybody can interact with each other. She highly recommends Section 8 housing.

**Anne Bowman of 62 Morgan Drive**, is concerned that these meetings are not recorded or available on Zoom. The Zoom meeting which others referenced tonight was the Racial Justice and Equity Commission (RJEC) talk, whose June 1 meeting is available for viewing on the Town website.

Ms. Augur responded to some of the comments made. She explained that the Town must prepare an affordable housing plan, per state law. The committee is currently in the exploration phase. At the last meeting, there was a discussion about defining a goal(s) and exploring strategies. She read the goals statement which came out of that meeting: "Provide for a variety of housing

options throughout Glastonbury to: expand housing options and choices, and help meet the housing needs of households of all ages, sizes, incomes, and characteristics.”

She noted that tonight’s meeting is being televised and will be available as a recording. The committee is considering a survey tonight. She clarified that the previous survey mentioned was from a different committee (the RJEC). This is a separate endeavor. Ms. Augur thanked everyone for speaking out tonight and encouraged all to continue to follow the process and spread the word throughout the community.

#### **4. Special Business**

##### **a. Community Survey**

Glenn Chalder explained that the purpose of tonight’s meeting is to go through the survey questions. They have adjusted the questions and revised the survey accordingly. If the committee is comfortable, they are ready to go into the field. The committee reviewed the questions by page.

On page 1, Mr. Stenman asked to revise the preamble, noting that the word “looking” in the second sentence is not appropriate. He suggested instead, “analyzing and evaluating”. He also stated that “recommending policies” should be clarified. It is important to know to whom this committee will be reporting and making decisions. In the second paragraph, he suggested flipping the end of the second sentence, because it is more important to specify that this committee will be understanding the shared goals and concerns, allowing them to plan. Lastly, he suggested a third paragraph to clarify for the community what “affordable” means. They should not leave that to each individual reading the survey. He also feels that it is important to reference that this work is pursuant to state statute and there is a timeframe of June 1, 2022 to have this recognized. Mr. Chalder stated that the affordability definition is difficult to list because the range is quite broad. He suggested instead setting up a simple table with that information. He agreed to work with Ms. Augur and Mr. Mullen on that.

On page 2, Mr. Chalder explained that this page meant to ask people, what is their housing story? Mr. Stenman suggested asking whether people own or rent their homes. Mr. Chalder explained that they are trying to get an idea of the diversity of people’s experiences and asking about rental versus ownership does not add complexity. Ms. Carroll agreed. The end goal is to help people get a sense of what kinds of homes they have lived in. Keeping this streamlined is more advantageous. Ms. Tanski wonders if they should include a way to ask about rent or own because it affects the question of strategies. There is an existing question of whether Glastonbury needs more ownership options, rental options, or both, and what the balance should be. Mr. Chalder suggested question 6 as the place to explore that. The committee agreed. Ms. Tanski suggested also adding to question 7, which discusses the size of the housing unit, the question of rent versus own. The committee agreed to add that.

On page 3, Mr. Stenman asked to change the word “portfolio” to “inventory” on questions 8 and 9. Ms. Carroll asked if they could build into the question, “which three of the following housing types do you think should Glastonbury prioritize?” Mr. Paindiris has an issue with question 9 *h*,

which he believes is a subset of *f*. Ms. Tanski thinks they should keep the approach because it is important to gather information on how that changes perception in needs. Mr. Chalder suggested deleting the words “service” and “trade” and just listing examples of workers in those industries.

On page 4, Mr. Chalder stated that they may need better definitions, such as for the word “character” and public water and sewer, which were raised during the public comment session. Ms. Carroll suggested “dedicated municipal funds” in place of the “housing trust fund.” Mr. Paindiris asked if sub-question *i* is something that the Town should be doing because he believes that it should be more general. The Town should encourage developers and others to purchase/rehab homes, but not actually do it themselves. Mr. Chalder stated that he originally understood this question to mean that the Town would be doing this. Mr. Paindiris asked if they could add to the end of that sentence, “by the Town or by the private sector.” Mr. Stenman suggested changing “the Town” to “Glastonbury,” to maintain consistency.

For sub-question *d*, Ms. Tanski recommends that Glastonbury look at ways to encourage the private sector to see this as in their interest through incentives and other strategies. Mr. Chalder cautioned that the market prices on units of 80% of AMI can be challenging. Ms. Augur suggested the wording be changed to “incentivized and otherwise encouraged.” Ms. Carroll asked about offering a definition of accessory dwelling units. Also, for question 10 *k* and *l*, she suggested they say, increasing affordable housing options and choices. Mr. Chalder agreed to add that there because the key purpose is to add the affordable option.

On page 5, Mr. Chalder explained that the open-ended questions are a challenge to code. They will try to group the responses in a meaningful way. Ms. Carroll suggested flipping questions 11 and 12. Ms. Tanski explained that question 11, regarding more general housing, is important because it allows respondents to see themselves in the questions and plans that Glastonbury is making right now.

On page 6, Mr. Chalder explained that these are the typical demographic questions they hope to use to evaluate the types of responses they get. He suggested adding the following questions: “what do you pay in rent?” and “what do you think your housing is worth?” Neil Griffin stated that those questions might help shed light on demographics. Ms. Parent suggested asking, “What percentage of your income goes towards housing?” Mr. Chalder explained that that involves more high-level math. The question could be, “do you spend more or less than 30% of your income on housing?” Ms. Carroll thinks that the two percentage questions make more sense. She asked if people answer the household income question. Mr. Chalder stated that there is generally strong participation in the income question, but it is one of the two questions, along with gender, which can be avoided. Understanding people’s circumstances can help them a great deal. Mr. Stenman asked to keep in mind the other components of rent that are not included in the state definition.

Mr. Chalder stated that, if the committee is comfortable, they can go into the field next week and keep the survey open for a full 4 weeks, until Sunday, September 26. They have drafted various PR materials, such as posters, press releases, and social media posts, to try to get the survey to go viral. Their hope is to generate wide knowledge of the survey and strong responses. An audience member asked about including the Senior Center as a resource. Mr. Chalder explained that they

could either have paper surveys there or somebody in the center could assist seniors in filling out the survey online.

b. Discussion of Potential Affordable Housing Strategies for Glastonbury

Mr. Chalder explained that this is a discussion booklet, not strategies. Page 1 includes the goal statement, which was refined based on the exercise at the last meeting. It will continue to be refined as they proceed along this process. He noted that assisted housing and deed-restricted housing are the main avenues of affordable housing. Pages 2 and 3 are about increasing assisted housing units. The blue box on page 3 includes high-priority options which might appeal to the Committee for further discussion, and the white box below it is options that are lower priority which they might mention in the plan. He stated that the committee will drive what will be included in each box.

Neil Griffin thinks that supporting and collaborating with the Housing Authority is a good idea. Nonprofits can develop some properties, so including that is an important aspect. The more tools in the toolbox, the better the chances of adding affordable housing in town. Mr. Chalder stated that some of the issues of deeper affordability become harder and harder to work with the private sector on. Many people in town are not aware of the accomplishments that the Housing Authority has made in this regard. Mr. Griffin explained that if there are opportunities with the state or federal level to subsidize rents, then that would remove a huge hurdle and would essentially be a market-rate property for developers. Mr. Stenman added that most people do not understand the development process and its (significant) length of time. Particularly with affordable housing, site control is of key importance. It requires submitting very detailed applications. Developers do not want to be burdened for two or three years before a sale occurs. Having architectural plans at 80% or 90% is almost a threshold for funding to proceed. Mr. Griffin explained that they have one opportunity every year to apply for funding. Then, they spend the rest of the year searching and applying for alternative funding sources, which are also competitive.

Page 4 concerns increasing deed-restricted units, which typically (but not always) occur because of private development. Glastonbury has two at the present time. Mr. Chalder explained the five different “flavors” that are available through which a deed-restricted development can occur: imposed, enabled (does not generally happen), incentivized, required, or created (which basically does the job of the Housing Authority). He provided examples from other communities in Connecticut. The state requirement is a minimum of 40 years for a deed-restricted unit, but some communities have adopted requirements that are longer, such as the life of the unit. He outlined strategies, such as investigating ways to use tax incentives or offering financial payments for somebody to accept a deed restriction on their property. While the committee could recommend or encourage those options, he noted that these are fiscal issues which are perhaps beyond the scope of what this committee should be doing. He also cautioned that if unique affordable housing plans are crafted for administering the affordability of individual projects, it becomes a municipal nightmare to monitor.

Mr. Griffin explained that the program for deed-restricted ownership in Glastonbury failed years ago because the formula used to calculate resale value was tied to two indicators that were no

longer reported. Also, some people decide to change features/make improvements to increase their resale value, which cannot happen with a deed-restricted home. He feels that these complications should not be allowed in a deed-restricted home. Mr. Chalder explained that there could be education for the residents, informing them that any betterments made to the home are done at their own risk. Mr. Paindiris thinks that the deed-restricted ownership model was a disaster in Glastonbury, and he would not support that strategy. He definitely does not support putting that as a top priority.

Ms. Tanski has concerns about deed-restricted units creating a second class of ownership which people do not know they are getting into. Otherwise, it only works for one owner and becomes a windfall. She is also concerned that converting naturally occurring affordable housing into deed-restricted units would negatively impact middle-income families. Glastonbury needs to be comfortable with the fact that there is more need for housing here than exists. This could create problems for the families that are just above the 80% AMI threshold. Mr. Chalder explained that there is a challenge in their approach to the concept of deed-restricted units. If units are not deed-restricted, then the market takes over, and the people who need the housing get left behind. He does not think that it has to be all ownership or all rentals. Glastonbury is not as far along on the deed-restricted spectrum as they could be. Other communities have done things that might work here. He asked if the committee is prepared to explore some of these creative options.

Mr. Paindiris clarified that he is against deed-restricted units with respect to home ownership, not rentals. Mr. Stenman shared Mr. Paindiris' concerns on home ownership for deed-restricted units. He questions the number of units that could be achieved in Glastonbury. They should be focusing on creating a larger volume of affordable housing, and he is fearful that the private sale alternative would move along at a snail's pace. Ms. Tanski asked if Glastonbury's negative experience with deed-restricted units was centered around the expectation that buyers who had this would operate in market circumstances? Mr. Chalder reiterated the idea of incorporating an educational aspect to this, so that people are aware of what they are purchasing.

Mr. Chalder will update the working document to deploy the survey soon. Ms. Tanski suggested that, for the next meeting, they have an idea of whether the community would like to prioritize either the deed-restricted ownership or rental models. Mr. Chalder agreed that the next meeting will pick up there for discussion.

## 5. Adjournment

With no further business to come before the Steering Committee, the meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m. The next meeting will be held September 22, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Lilly Torosyan  
Recording Clerk