

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING STEERING COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2021**

The Glastonbury Affordable Housing Steering Committee held a Meeting at 6:00p.m. on Wednesday, October 27, 2021 in the Council Chambers of Town Hall at 2155 Main Street. The meeting was also broadcast in real time and via a live video stream.

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
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

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Augur at 6:04 p.m.

2. Minutes of September 22, 2021 Meeting

Mr. Stenman had one comment: on page 5, the second paragraph, the penultimate sentence, which reads, “those applications are for,” he asked to then add, “acquisition/rehabilitation of existing or”.

There were no further comments on the minutes.

3. Public Communication and Petitions

Ms. Augur noted that *Pamela Lockard of 10 Southgate Drive*, sent an email with comments about Section 8 vouchers. She asked whether existing apartment complexes could be required to accept a certain number of housing vouchers and a question about Open Communities Alliance (OCA), who will be presenting tonight.

Anne Bowman at 62 Morgan Drive, thanked the committee for including a presentation by OCA. She appreciates their hard work for Glastonbury.

Pamela Lucas at 145 Moseley Terrace, also thanked the committee and Mr. Chalder for drafting a plan with a variety of affordable housing strategies and for inviting OCA to speak tonight. She is a member of TALK (Truth in Action with Love & Kindness), which is a partner with OCA, and they seek to learn about ways to expand opportunities for affordable housing. She hopes that there will be ample opportunity for the public to view and comment on the plan, and to outline what happens to the finalized draft: where it will go, and whether the community will have additional opportunities for input.

4. Special Business

a. Invited Discussion with Open Communities Alliance

Ms. Augur explained that TALK inquired whether the Committee would be interested in hearing more from OCA, who had presented their Zoning and Equity Report with Glastonbury-specific analysis a few months prior. Tonight, they will present a Fair Share housing model for Glastonbury.

Sam Giffin, Policy and Data Analyst at OCA, noted that there is a dual crisis of lack of housing and segregation in Glastonbury. The town also contains a disproportionate number of single-family houses compared to other types of housing. OCA has looked at states across the country and found New Jersey to be the most effective in producing affordable housing for families which is meaningful and not simply arbitrary. There are about 70,000 affordable housing units in New Jersey, and 50,000 more in the pipeline. Mr. Giffin explained that OCA developed HB 611: Fair Share Planning and Zoning, which was introduced in the state legislature last year, to incorporate New Jersey's model in Connecticut. He presented the "fair share" framework for affordable housing, which includes the following:

- Developing a base for housing needs. Cost-burdened households spend anywhere from 30% to 80% of AMI (area median income) on housing, which is a large range. He noted that one third of Connecticut households are overpaying for their housing.
- Allocating regional needs within towns. The Zoning Enabling Act (Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-2) has been used to develop the allocation factors, which are the following:
 - Median Income of the Town
 - Wealth/Assets of the Town
 - Percentage of Multifamily Housing in the Town
 - Poverty Rate of the Town
 - Using the Fair Share allocation system, OCA has determined that Glastonbury has a high fair share, relative to some other towns in the region, at 1,550 units.

Roger Maldonado, Staff Attorney at OCA, highlighted the broad themes that emerged from their Glastonbury-specific analysis of the Zoning and Equity Report, which he presented to the Committee at their August 25 meeting. It is critical not just to plan to build affordable housing, but to emphasize affordable housing which is not age-restricted, and therefore, accessible to lower-income families. This will help Glastonbury become a more inclusive community. He asked that the Town not place high priority on CHFA/USDA mortgages or deed restriction for homeownership.

He reiterated Mr. Giffin's comments that there has not been much development of multi-family housing in town. The only way to build three or more units of housing is through the PAD regulations, which involve multiple rounds of public hearings and fees, and thus, can be cumbersome and inefficient procedurally. They also require large parcel sizes, and do not allow for rental housing. Mr. Maldonado stated that there is a clear need for greater densities, and the strict density limits on units in the PAD is both a planning concern and a zoning concern.

He encouraged the Committee to refer to the introduction and conclusion of other town analyses, noting that they contain many valuable lessons, such as the need to address planning and not just zoning. Another lesson is to not limit where multifamily units can be built, and to not over rely on accessory dwelling units.

Ms. Augur asked if any of the other communities which OCA targeted in their report are pushing ahead with unique concepts for affordable housing plans themselves. Mr. Maldonado stated that they are in the process of reviewing and monitoring what is coming forward. They have not seen enough so far, but he commended Glastonbury for allowing them to speak and share their data. Mr. Giffin added that local community grassroots support for these kinds of initiatives have also helped in Glastonbury.

b. Community Survey Results

Mr. Chalder explained that the survey was open for four weeks from August to September, and a total of 502 people participated. For a community of Glastonbury's size, statistically, Mr. Stenman does not believe that the results are very representative. He asked how meaningful the survey results are, with such a low response rate. Mr. Chalder stated that the number is far higher than the number of people likely to attend a public meeting. The real value in this survey is the general nature of the responses which can help them to consider things moving forward. He urged the Committee to not rely on the survey for a statistical basis, but to consider it informative on a qualitative basis. He then went through the results question by question.

Mr. Paindiris was not impressed by the results. Nothing surprised him except the question about location, where 59% of participants stated that affordable housing should be in all areas of Glastonbury. He was happy with this takeaway, which speaks to the fair share presentation from OCA. Ms. Augur asked if the results made Mr. Chalder think differently about the strategies that the Committee has been going over. He stated that the survey results show that people do not understand certain terms, such as 'housing fund.' Going forward, they need to explain terminology and modules to the public in a clear, effective way.

Ms. Carroll stated that question 10 (regarding what participants thought the Town could use more of, in terms of housing stock) was more of the same. Part of the challenge is that more of the same is not going to work because the Town needs to diversify its housing stock. She noted that the Town Council has worked with the TPZ to see which things work and which do not. In the same way that people do not recognize the true nature of what affordable housing is, they need to be very cognizant of what these units—such as a multifamily condominium or an apartment building—looks like and could look like. She also found the responses to question 11 unsurprising but also a big challenge.

Ms. Tanski suggested including a visual gallery showing how examples of these various housing options (such as multifamily units) can fit in residential areas. This could help assuage the fear that some residents may have about how these buildings may or may not ‘fit’ in with their surroundings. If the Town wants to preserve open space and maintain a suburban/rural feel, they can do it with tracts of affordable lots. Mr. Chalder noted that cottage courts, which are small compact developments of single-family detached units built around a common courtyard, are quite attractive and could be a choice in diversifying Glastonbury’s housing portfolio while expanding affordable housing. He believes that the first part of the Committee’s affordable housing plan is going to be the educational component.

Ms. Tanski asked if there are any identified issues in certain areas of town which could pose a challenge for the construction of multifamily housing units. Mr. Chalder explained that, in certain parts of town, there is an issue of underlying soil types. An engineered septic system could overcome many constraints, but it is a delicate issue for discussion and consideration.

c. Continued Strategies Discussion

Mr. Paindiris stated that this endeavor must be a partnership with the developers, and he has not yet heard from any of them. He would like to hear about what they need, what hurdles they face, and what they would recommend, to make it economically feasible for them to develop affordable housing projects in town. Their input is vital for him to make a decision on any plan. Ms. Tanski reiterated her concern with the strategy of converting currently naturally occurring affordable housing into deed restricted units. Mr. Johnson stated that the Town will be receiving \$10.2 million in ARPA funding. He has outlined about 20 broad strokes concepts to the Council about how the monies could be allocated. One of the categories he included was affordable housing, which could include the Town allocating seed money to create a housing trust fund. He noted that that could be a future discussion topic.

d. Next Steps — Draft Plan and Public Input

Ms. Augur reviewed the process of the draft plan, which will be presented at the Committee’s next meeting for their review and revisions. There will then be an opportunity for public comment in January. After that, the TPZ will offer their recommendation(s) to the Council, who is the ultimate authority in adopting the plan. Ms. Augur stated that they will also try to gather input from developers for the November meeting.

5. Adjournment

With no further business to come before the Steering Committee, the meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m. The next meeting will take place on Monday, November 22, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Lilly Torosyan
Recording Clerk