



TOWN OF
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW LONDON HOUSING COMMISSION

November 2, 2022, 6:00PM

Whipple Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: Peter Nichols, Winfried Feneberg, Amy Kaplan, Marilyn Kidder, Michael Quinn, Randy Foose, Ann Bedard

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tom Vannatta, Steve Theroux, Nancy Rollins

OTHERS PRESENT: Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator, Mark Fougere, Consultant

Call to Order – Peter Nichols called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

Review of Minutes – September 21, 2022

IT WAS MOVED (Michael Quinn) AND SECONDED (Ann Bedard) to accept the minutes from the September 21, 2022 meeting. Amy Kaplan, Winfried Feneberg and Randy Foose abstained from the vote. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED.

Debrief Work Sessions

Chair Nichols discussed the work sessions that have been held with the Planning Board regarding zoning amendments. Chair Nichols asked consultant Mark Fougere to elaborate more on the back lots as there was a need for more clarification. Mr. Fougere developed a document that details the advantages of backlots for Workforce Housing and this was distributed to the Housing Commission members. This will also be sent to Planning Board members. Planning Board Chair Gorman expressed concerns about this being accepted by the voters, so Mr. Fougere pointed out the advantages of backlots. Michael Quinn stated it might be worth quantifying this and getting information on how many properties would qualify or be a candidate for a backlot. Chair Nichols agreed it would be good to get some examples. If backlots are going to be an issue it may be wise to leave it out of the amendment changes this year and bring it back at another time.

Winfried Feneberg shared that when he sees proposals on the ballot, and they have been endorsed by the Planning Board, he doesn't question the details as he trusts that the Planning Board has done their job. It will be up to the Housing Commission to convince the Planning Board that these changes are a good thing and the time is right.

Ann Bedard shared that at a recent Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting, Town Planner Adam Ricker shared the proposed zoning amendments and there is a lot of cleaning up that is being done outside of the workforce housing proposed changes. There is a lot of concern about density and how increasing it can change the character of a town. Another concern that that people are expressing are how do we know that people that work in New London will be the ones renting the workforce housing units? The answer is that we don't, and the units won't just be for residents of New London.

Marilyn Kidder added that some may be rented by retirees and not even people in the workforce. The Housing Commission discussed the proposed Twin Pines project and clarified that this project is considered affordable housing, not workforce housing.

Community Outreach

Strategies & Objectives

Winfried Feneberg stated he is concerned that we are in defensive mode. We need to focus on the past two years and the fact that the town voted overwhelmingly to address the housing problem. The vast majority of the town has said something needs to be done. All the proposed changes will help the town achieve this mission and we are giving people what they have asked for. Technical amendments to the ordinance are what is going to allow changes to happen.

Mr. Fougere stated the process moving forward will be that the Planning Board will hold a public hearing regarding proposed zoning changes. They then need to vote to send it to ballot and any ballot changes have to be to the town clerk by February 1, 2023 according to statute. Once the board votes to send it to ballot, advocacy for change can start.

Means & Methods

Chair Nichols stated the panel discussions have been successful and well received but he feels it should now be broken down into smaller groups because the issues are complex. It is difficult to explain things to a larger audience and address different levels of questions. Michael Quinn stated identifying key influential groups would be his suggestion for the direction to move towards. Chair Nichols shared one way he has reached out has been to call local churches and has sent information to them to distribute to parishioners. Chair Nichols has also been doing some research on the cost of workforce housing.

Funding & Support

Navigator grant – Chair Nichols sent materials out to the Housing Commission regarding the Navigator grant. It is a grant that will support the towns of Wilmot, Sunapee, Newbury and New London through the Regional Planning Commission. The Regional Planning Commission will hire a navigator that will provide services to advise and help the towns primarily with community engagement or regulatory change. This will be free to the town and helps us stay in touch with what other towns are doing and can help us do our own community engagement better.

In January, the University of New Hampshire Extension will be holding a housing academy which they have done several times in the past. The town of New London can send four people to the academy to learn more about community engagement. Chair Nichols is hoping at least a few Housing Commission members will attend.

HOP Grant – Chair Nichols stated he would like to use money from this grant towards an honorarium to have a speaker present to the community as part of a panel.

New Business

A New Hampshire Housing Finance Seminar will be held on November 15, 2022. It will be in Manchester from 8:00am-1:00pm. An organization called Root Policy Research, a powerhouse consulting firm, will be speaking on demographic studies and market analysis. They will do a preview of the new state housing needs assessment study.

Future Meetings

Future meeting dates: Will be decided after the meeting with the Planning Board tomorrow.

Adjournment

IT WAS MOVED (Randy Foose) AND SECONDED (Michael Quinn) to adjourn the meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 7:27PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson

Recording Secretary
Town of New London