



TOWN OF
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW LONDON HOUSING COMMISSION

September 21, 2022, 6:00PM

Whipple Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: Peter Nichols, Marilyn Kidder, Michael Quinn, Randy Foose, Tom Vannatta, Steve Theroux

MEMBERS ABSENT: Amy Kaplan, Winfried Feneberg

OTHERS PRESENT: Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator, Mark Fougere, John Wilson, Peter Bianchi, Anne Bedard

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

Review of Minutes – July 27, 2022

IT WAS MOVED (Randy Foose) AND SECONDED (Steve Theroux) to accept the minutes of the July 27, 2022 meeting. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED.

Discussion: September 14, 2022 Panel

Chair Nichols reflected on the developer panel that was held on September 14, 2022. It was well attended as there were approximately 120 people in attendance. Some of the discussion was focused on the potential Twin Pines project which they anticipated, he felt that they were still able to accomplish what they had hoped. Steve Theroux commented that the panel did a good job breaking down some of the barriers relative to misconceptions about workforce and affordable housing. It furthered everyone's education on the subject.

A specific issue that came up was traffic which is a concern with more housing in town. Another concern was related to real estate taxes and any impact workforce housing might have on that.

Set Schedule

Chair Nichols stated that two work sessions with the Planning Board need to be scheduled in October to discuss zoning considerations that the Housing Commission will be recommending. Chair Nichols distributed a doodle poll to find available times to meet. These will be one hour working sessions.

NHHFA Housing Opportunities Grant (HOP) Update

Chair Nichols has done some research and has been in touch with New Hampshire Housing Finance representative George Regan who is a liaison with NHHFA. Chair Nichols sent him the link for both panel discussions and Mr. Regan shared that he was impressed and pleased with it. He suggested that the Housing Commission consider looking into the HOP grant. There is a forty-minute webinar that Chair Nichols will send to those that are interested. The HOP grant is part of a \$100 million package that Governor Sununu put forth. Part of that grant includes 5 million dollars that will go to single municipalities to create housing opportunities. It is

distributed through the Bureau of economic advancement to spur development. There are two sub-agencies that administer the program and they are New Hampshire Cooperative Education and the other in Plan NH. The funds can be used for hiring consultants and for conducting three phases of regulatory change (needs analysis and planning, regulatory and audit review of regulations, regulatory development).

Regulatory Amendment Discussion

Mark Fougere shared that New London has had a workforce housing ordinance in place for over ten years and there are many reasons why no one has ever used it. Mr. Fougere also developed talking points to help Commission members explain workforce housing and other definitions when talking with the public.

Recommended zoning changes to the New London workforce housing overlay district that were discussed are as follows:

1. Section A – it was recommended to delete the fixed date of the housing needs assessment as these reports can be updated over time.
2. Section E – amend table one to allow for the development of townhome multi-family workforce housing (allowed in the R1, R2 and commercial zones). This development would be limited to buildings containing no more than 5 units.
3. Section F - When the workforce Housing Overlay District was adopted, properties of Colby Sawyer and New London Hospital were excluded. It is recommended that these properties be included in the district to maximize potential locations of workforce housing.
4. Section G – as there is no town staff available to analyze cost implications of housing development, along with no set standards or criteria within the statute to determine what reasonable costs are, these provisions should be deleted.
5. Amend G-1 – The existing zoning language allows the Planning Board to consider any type of density increase for a workforce housing application. A more specific outline of what density is allowed is preferred. Specific densities that are recommended include 12 units per acre for multi-family garden buildings, 6 units per acre for townhome developments, increase in density of 40% for planned one and duplex subdivisions. In addition, back lots with 25 feet of frontage would be allowed; the minimum lot area would be determined by NH Department of Environmental Services.
6. Amend G-4 to clarify which setbacks apply and allow for a reduction of setback requirements up to 50%.
7. Amend H2 – Clarify that workforce housing units must remain affordable for 20 years for owner occupied units and 30 years for rental units. Delete provisions that require third party review agencies to be public agencies or non-profits. Delete provisions in section 2.a, as rent increases are set by statute.
8. Amend I – The designated administrator will qualify all workforce housing applicants, renter or owner occupied. Detailed documents that are necessary along with tax return information is not necessary.
9. Amend J5 – As noted above, delete provisions detailing development cost details.
10. Amend K, Condition Use Permit Criteria (CUP) – the existing language includes a number of barriers to the creation of workforce housing. Words such as compatibility and harmonious

create reasons for denial as any multi-family use, since it has not been allowed in any quantity, could be deemed not compatible with existing neighborhoods. It is also suggested to delete the 100-foot buffer for multi-family uses, as well as the requirement that they be served by public water and sewer. The goal of the workforce housing ordinance is to allow flexibility. A number of new CUP criteria are added including that 20% of rental unit projects density shall be set aside as workforce and 30% of owner-occupied units shall be set aside.

11. Amend N – this provision takes into account future investments into properties which is not provided for in state statute.
12. Amend O – Deletes provisions relative to third party review of workforce housing applications. State statute already provides for this authority.
13. Amend O5 – Clarifies income compliance requirements for both owner occupied and rental occupied units.

Future Meetings

Future meeting dates:

September 28th 6:00 – 8:00pm

October – 2 joint planning board work sessions to be scheduled.

Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:05PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson

Recording Secretary
Town of New London