



TOWN OF
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW LONDON HOUSING COMMISSION

September 28, 2022, 6:00PM

Syd Crook Room

MEMBERS PRESENT: Peter Nichols, Marilyn Kidder, Michael Quinn, Tom Vannatta, Amy Kaplan, Steve Theroux, Winfried Feneberg, Ann Bedard

MEMBERS ABSENT: Nancy Rollins, Randy Foose

OTHERS PRESENT: Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator, Mark Fougere

Call to Order – Peter Nichols called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.

Review of Minutes – None

Regulatory Amendment Discussion – Mark Fougere

Chair Nichols previously sent the Housing Commission members the three working documents that will be discussed tonight. One of the documents is the red lined draft of Article XXVI which is the workforce housing overlay district ordinance. Mr. Fougere also put together a document which goes step by step describing the red lined sections and the background for each one. The third document is a regulatory review update which reviews other zoning considerations to think about.

Mr. Fougere picked up where they left off at the last meeting with proposed amendment recommendations. Most of the remaining proposed changes deal with administrative issues. The following amendments were discussed:

- Section I – Documentation of Eligibility for Workforce housing. Whoever the administrating authority is will qualify all workforce housing applicants and this doesn't need to be specified. The term Administrator should be better defined. The current definition in the zoning ordinance states that the Administrator must be approved by the Planning Board but secured and paid for by the developer.
- Section J - Conditional Use Permit Application – this includes administrative things that the applicant is expected to submit. Some recommended deletions were discussed in section 5. One deletion that was discussed was (b) the project cost estimate. Chair Nichols felt the cost of housing is so important so they may want to understand how they are doing with managing the cost and the quality of construction. Mr. Quinn agreed and stated without being intrusive, he would like to know that whoever is hired is going to be able to finish the job at the level that they bid the work. Mr. Fougere had concerns about who on the Planning Board would be asking those questions and who is qualified to do so.

- Section K – Condition Use Permit Criteria – This is the criteria that the Planning Board is going to use to evaluate the application. The existing language includes a number of barriers to the creation of Workforce housing. Using words such as compatible and harmonious creates an easy avenue to deny a project. Using the word reasonable seems more appropriate. Ann Bedard suggested that some form of this paragraph should remain. Neighbors should have the right to come before the zoning or planning board to say if they have concerns about a project. We need to give them an avenue of speaking out and some resolution if there has to be a compromise.

It was 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 provision that requires that all applications comply with town zoning, site plan and subdivision regulations is deleted. The goal of a Workforce Housing ordinance is to allow flexibility. A number of new CUP criteria are added including 20% of rental unit projects density shall be set aside as workforce and 30% of owner-occupied units shall be set aside.

- Section N – Limitation on Improvements - This section is deleted as it is confusing and not consistent with state statute. The provision takes into account future investments into properties which is not provided for in state statute.
- Section O – Administration, Professional Reviews, Compliance and Monitoring – Deletes provisions relative to third party review of workforce housing applications. State statute already provides for this authority. When a developer submits any type of study, the Planning Board has the right to have it peer reviewed by an outside expert of their choosing and the developer pays for it.
- Section O5 – Clarifies income compliance requirements for both owner occupied and rental occupied units.

Ann Bedard also suggested taking the word affordable out of this as there is a lot of confusion between affordable and workforce housing. Amy Kaplan stated all of this information needs to be very clear so that people understand it when voting on these changes.

Mr. Fougere submitted an addendum that replaces #5 & 6 that outlines reporting requirements and oversight for both rental and owner occupied. Ann Bedard asked if you have to qualify each year for workforce housing. Mr. Fougere stated yes, for rentals you have to reapply each year. Ms. Bedard stated this is a misnomer that is going around and should be made clear to people. It is different for owner occupied.

Items that Mr. Fougere will follow up on:

- Define the term “garden style” apartments and “administrator”.

- There was discussion regarding calculations that don't get a whole number and whether to round up or down. The group decided if it is .5 or higher it would be rounded up. Lower than that would be rounded down.
- Setbacks
- Rollover restriction language
- Landscape buffer
- Provision for the ability to look at costs
- "Reasonableness" paragraph
- Increase to 25% for rental units
- Insert at least 51% of units be 2-bedroom
- Discuss the study peer review with Town Planner Adam Ricker

New Business - none

Public Comment - none

Future Meetings:

Future meeting dates:

October 3, 2022

October 13 – joint planning session with Planning Board

October 26 – possible joint planning session with Planning Board

Adjournment

IT WAS MOVED (Amy Kaplan) AND SECONDED (Winfried Feneberg) to adjourn the meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 7:56PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson

Recording Secretary
Town of New London