

RIDGEFIELD AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, JULY 7, 2021 (via Zoom teleconference)

PRESENT: Dave Goldenberg (chair), Sharon Coleman, Kent Rohrer, Debra Franceschini-Gatje, Sheryl Knapp, Lori Mazzola, Whit Campbell

ABSENT: Kevin Brown. Krista Willet

GUESTS: Karen Martin (Town Planner)

The meeting was called to order at 7:03pm

Dave opened the meeting.

a. Affordable housing plan and grant

The RFP has been prepared and reviewed by Town purchasing agent. Dave has 5 or 6 potential vendors and will await direction from the town purchasing agent prior to releasing. Dave will advise all bidders that there is \$11,000 of available funding. Bidders will have four weeks to reply.

b. Housing for adults with disabilities

Sheryl sent an article about new development in Darien. It will be 12 studio apartments. It will be rent subsidized and will be completed in the fall. Abilis is coordinating. Abilis is currently active in Ridgefield with a day program at St Andrew's Church. Dave mentioned Prospect and Halpin Lane for Ability Beyond for an additional Sunrise Cottage. Dave and Sheryl to discuss moving forward with Ability Beyond.

c. Prospect Ridge expansion

\$50,000 grant has been awarded to conduct feasibility study. Dave and Kevin will draft RFP and circulate for comment. Debra suggested mixed use aspect be considered. There are options to operate this type of project. It could be the Ridgefield Housing Authority or some form of private development and management. These would be matters for the study to consider. Dave opened it up for public questions. Bob Hebert – 1. WPCA has not control over this commission. Fees were substantially increased over the past two years. 2. Housing Authority uses a property management company to manage certification and compliance. 3. Tax abatement on the Meadows was in place to 6 years. It is now financially stable. One additional

year of tax abatement was granted. 4. RGA did have 16 vacant properties across 152 total. All units are now “in process” to occupy. Tracey O’Connor questioned when sewer hookup fee was last increased. How many units are being proposed and how will it impact infrastructure. Dave – this is purpose of the study. 150 units was hypothetical at 10/units per acre.

d. ADU Survey

30 completed out of 140 sent. 19 were undelivered. Dave would like to look up those names and resend. Whit and Sharon offered to help. No analysis has been done.

d. Branchville TOD

No news or activity. Redding sewer does not look likely in short term. Debra will investigate other options.

f. P&Z 8-30g compliance/retention

Whit Campbell indicated no new news.

GENERAL DISCUSSION – Debra and Lori suggested we revisit agenda items each month.

g. Housing trust fund

Karen Martin joined the meeting P&Z has had preliminary discussion but did not discuss funding mechanism. Dave spoke with Becky and she indicated they were interested in understanding Inclusionary Zoning. This is typically a prerequisite for a Housing Trust Fund. Debra summarized the other area towns trust funds. Dave summarized the State and Town current conveyance and permitting fees. Any Trust Fund fees would be in addition to the existing fees. Other sources include grants and donations. We could evaluate history of building and sales to determine what could have been generated by various Trust Fund fees. Debra will evaluate under various fee structures.

h. Habitat site

No update on property. Sharon will provide input on two blighted properties. blighted for Habitat consideration.

i. Accessory units and middle housing

No updates.

j. FB and social media presence

Debra has been active in posting activities from around the state. We will remove this as an ongoing agenda item.

k. "Ridgefield Talks Housing"

Quarterly was the suggested frequency. Future topics will include Statewide issues, Fairfield County and Ridgefield local concerns.

m. Communication Planning/BOS presentation

Debra requested copy of BOS presentation. Lori and Debra requested that Dave advise the committee on interviews and press matters when speaking on behalf of RAHC. Dave will add election of RAHC officers to next meeting agenda. Bob Hebert suggests that we have a very clearly stated goal regarding affordable housing. What are the goals? Regarding Prospect Ridge, Bob suggested securing the property as a first step. Dave said BOS wanted feasibility study done first.

n. Minutes

The June meeting minutes were approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01pm

The next meeting will be August 4th

Recorded by Kent Rohrer, Secretary