

AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
OF Tuesday, December 6, 2022, 7:00 p.m.

EAST LYME PLANNING COMMISSION
AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE

East Lyme Town Hall, 108 Pennsylvania Ave, Niantic CT 06357
MEETING MINUTES

CHAIRMAN: Kirk Scott, VICE CHAIRMAN: Jason Deeble

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kirk Scott, Tim LaDucer, Jason Deeble, Rich Gordon, Norm Peck

MEMBERS ABSENT: Terrence Donovan

STAFF PRESENT: Gary A. Goeschel II, Planning Director;

STAFF ABSENT: William Mulholland, Zoning Official

Call to Order: Kirk Scott called the meeting to order at 7:05PM

I. **Additions to the Agenda - None**

II. **Review GOMAN+YORK Affordable Housing Plan Draft:**

K. Scott, inquired as to why only 3 of the 20 plus comments got addressed in the draft that went to public hearing.

G. Goeschel indicated there was a breakdown in communication between himself and the Town's consultant.

D. Poland suggested we address any comments, questions or concerns from the previous meeting as well as from the Planning Commission's public hearing and he would make the appropriate changes as discussed.

As such, the Committee reviewed the substantive comments from the November 21st meeting and Don said he would review the typographical changes outside the meeting.

The Committee discussed the following comments from the previous meeting:

1. Dates of the data. - Dr. Poland indicated he would provide footnotes regarding data and where it was sourced and from when.
2. He also indicated he would provide a summary of PA 21-49
3. Dr. Poland indicated elevators are an amenity and is a bit of a Building code issue. He indicated you can build a 3-story residential building without elevators. However, when you put residential over commercial, it is a commercial structure and must have elevators. Since the cost of the elevator undermines the financial feasibility of constructing affordable housing and although everyone wants mixed-use residential over

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AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF

Monday, October 17, 2022, 7:00 p.m.

commercial, not much actually gets built and the residential development is typically located adjacent to commercial development. As such, he felt eliminating the requirement to provide elevators in affordable housing application would remove a barrier to their construction. Zoning will have the final discretion on elevators.

4. G. Goeschel ask Dr. Poland if he could elaborate or explain the increase in median age and touch on the fact that we have added a bunch of affordable that has attracted seniors vs non-seniors.

Dr. Poland said it comes down to the census counting only earned income and not assets. He questions whether people are gaming the system, and if we're addressing the housing needs of seniors are we also addressing the housing needs of the working family. He indicated East Lyme was a rapidly aging community with many second homes. He indicated seasonal occupants hit retirement then move into their second home and that is why we are probably aging as quickly as we are.

Dr. Poland said: Redevelopment is considered to be the rehabilitation existing buildings not complete reconstruction. Dr. Poland thinks the greatest opportunity for affordable housing is in commercial areas. He indicated that more multi-family housing, affordable or not, is need. In addition, he noted a multi-family building is just as profitable as a commercial development.

5. Don, commented that Attorney Tim Hollister has reviewed all of the Affordable Housing Plans that have been prepared sin PA 21-49 and felt the biggest lacking aspect of them all is the overwhelming majority do not pin down location. They do not indicate where affordable housing should go in the Town or whether the community has the infrastructure and location that makes sense. By making 10-15% of the proposed housing affordable vs 30%, the development becomes more feasible. Dr. Poland suggested you can make 80%AMI vs 60% AMI work. He indicated other communities such as Avon, Tolland, South Windsor, have written inclusionary provisions in zoning regulations such as 5, 7, or 10% must be provided at or below 80%AMI and Deed restricted 40-yrs.
6. Dr. Poland clarified for the committee that no one knows exactly what the Legislature's intent was behind the phrase "affirmatively forward fair housing". However, he suggests it is going to depend on the municipality, how realtors deal with it, how it's promoted and marketed. When public housing authorities are involved, they must be cognizant of discrimination. There have been cases in federal fair housing violations. While those cases are challenging for developers to make, they also have won them. When PA21-49 passed, which included the opt out on ADUs, one provision was zoning needs to "affirmatively forward fair housing". No one knows exactly what that means. Dr. Poland believes it means zoning now must promote

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF
Monday, October 17, 2022, 7:00 p.m.**

fair housing which, includes affordable housing. Dr. Poland said, what it has done, is it has given an easier path to the fair housing though Zoning. As such, he included language to provide for affordable housing and to promote and affirmatively forward fair housing. Don will footnote and provide a more in-depth explanation.

7. Tax abatement Don indicated he has had experience on both developer and municipal sides. That's why he recommended Tax abatement. He will soften language. It was noted this is not policy but suggestion. A tool in the tool box.

III. Adjournment

MOTION: T. La Duce moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:34PM

SECOND: O. Fairchild, seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: Unanimous (7-0-0)

Respectfully Submitted,



**Gary A. Goeschel II
Director of Planning**

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