

RIDGEFIELD AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes

February 16, 2022 – 7:00 PM (via Zoom teleconference)

PRESENT: Dave Goldenberg (Chair), Kent Rohrer (Vice Chair), Sheryl Knapp, Kevin Brown, Sharon Coleman, Debra Franceschini, Lori Mazzola, Krista Willett

ABSENT: Whit Campbell

GUEST: Elizabeth DiSalvo (P&Z liaison); Glenn Chalder, Planimetrics.

The meeting was called to order via Zoom webinar at 7:01 PM.

1. **Current Business:**

- a) **Affordable housing plan and grant:** The Committee revisited Glenn's framework for the AHP in detail, determining which items to incorporate into the town's plan. Areas discussed included prospective ways of increasing Ridgefield's inventory of affordable housing developments – involving the creation of more assistive housing units for the elderly/disabled and families, more deed restricted units, and the extension of deed-restrictions – and potential regulatory changes, such as updating zoning regulations to allow for homes for adults with disabilities. It was agreed that CHFA mortgages should be encouraged; however, these would only be applicable to a very small number of residential units in Ridgefield due to income requirements for eligibility, making it unlikely that these first-time buyers would be approved for homes valued anywhere approaching the new \$600,000 maximum. Also discussed were potential strategies proposed by Glenn for increasing housing density – including allowing two-family buildings and conversion of existing buildings into 3-4 family units, courtyard apartments, and mixed-use buildings. Such strategies could be used to facilitate the creation of a denser, middle housing zoning area, forming a transitional zone between downtown Ridgefield and outlying single-family zones. When considering these prospective zoning changes, the Committee discussed, and elicited Glenn's input regarding, its interaction with and role alongside P & Z, especially in terms of the zoning recommendations made in the plan. It was agreed to keep most of the proposed strategies for Dave and Sharon to begin fleshing out the plan for the committee to review. Proposals designed to establish a supportive affordable housing framework would also be included in the town plan, such as establishing and funding the previously discussed Housing Trust Fund, establishing organizational support to advocate for and coordinate affordable housing efforts, elderly tax relief, and building knowledge base (e.g., through social media). It was noted that the HTF could potentially provide such funding. The Committee also agreed not to allow builders to bypass the special permit process when building deed-restricted affordable housing. Dave then presented a series of selected strategies and regulations for facilitating affordable housing he had compiled from several other CT town plans for possible inclusion in Ridgefield's plan.

2. Public comment was provided orally from one meeting participant recommending that the town opt out from state regulations to the extent possible to maximize local control. Additional questions and comments were read by Dave from the Zoom Q&A from another member of the public pertaining to the overlap between the Affordable Housing Committee and P & Z and clarification of overlay comments.
3. Debra reported that she researched the possibility of changing the scheduling of upcoming Committee meetings to avoid conflicts with other town committee meetings. Wendy Lionetti, Town Clerk, indicated that regular town meetings can be rescheduled, provided that 30 days' notice is provided; they would not be considered special meetings. Dave to do a doodle poll to determine the best day time per month, likely the fourth Wednesday.
4. **Minutes:** Lori moved to approve the February 2 minutes as written and Debra seconded; the minutes were accepted unanimously.
5. **Adjourn:** Debra moved to adjourn, Kevin seconded, and the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 9:12 PM.

The next regular meeting has been scheduled for 3/2/22.

Prepared by Sheryl Knapp, Secretary