

RIDGEFIELD AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE  
Meeting Minutes

July 26, 2023 – 7:00 PM  
Town Hall – 400 Main Street, Ridgefield  
Small Conference Room, Lower Level

PRESENT: Dave Goldenberg (Chair), Whit Campbell, Sharon Coleman, Debra Franceschini-Gatje, Sheryl Knapp, Lori Mazzola and Krista Willett

ABSENT: Kent Rohrer (Vice Chair) and Kevin Brown

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM.

**1. Public Comment:**

- a) Christine More: asked Committee members, as well as guests Rudy Marconi and Rob Hendricks, who will be participating in the Desegregate CT walk on Saturday.
- b) Kevin Radigan: asked if there have been studies that have established a cap on how many people the town can absorb, and what impact additional people will have on traffic.

**2. Discussion with First Selectman Rudy Marconi and Planning & Zoning Chair Rob Hendrick**

- a) Rob Hendrick: The Planning & Zoning Commission was able to complete and pass an inclusionary zoning regulation, incorporating feedback from the public. Applications for four or more dwelling units must allocate a specified number of units as affordable based on state's definition. There is also a non-mandatory, incentive-based component that provides for zoning changes if a developer allocates more than what is required, at the discretion of the Commission. If a developer feels strongly that they cannot incorporate affordable units, they can pay a fee in lieu of creating those affordable units. The regulation will go into effect immediately, but does not apply to applications submitted prior to the date the regulation was approved.
- b) Rudy: Met with Redding First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton to discuss the \$200k grant received from the state to investigate the extension of the sewer lines between Ridgefield and Redding. A variety of projects are underway to make the area more pedestrian friendly, including repairing walking bridges and building a sidewalk plus walking bridges on route 102 from route 7 to Florida Road. Also considered will be whether to make excess station parking available to merchants.

Mr. Marconi asked for input from the RAHC regarding compliance with SP998 (Fair Share) to convey at an upcoming COST (CT Council of Small Towns) session in August. RAHC Committee members will provide input on the proposed Bill to Kent via email.

The BOS will be voting on whether to reappoint the RAHC at a December meeting to re-establish the Committee for another four years.

### 3. Current Business:

- a) **Plan implementation updates:** See attached Status for updates. RAHC to work with PNZ to better understand incentives related to affordable housing.
- b) **Other new business:** Elizabeth DeSalvo presented a project she has been working on in the Branchville area privately as an architect. The development would be geared toward younger residents, consisting of largely affordable and sustainable units. They are investigating CHAFA and other funding sources. The goal is 20% affordable at 60 or 80 SMI, likely 45-48 small units. Would be ADA accessible or easily accessible, and there would be multiple businesses on site.

### 4. New Business:

- a) **Recording of meeting test** – video conferencing and recording appear to have gone smoothly.
- b) **Proposed Public Comment scheduling change.** Debra made a motion that we allow public comment also at the beginning of meetings, in lieu of the 5 minutes for questions. After discussion, she amended the motion to call for a maximum of 30 minutes at the beginning and 15 minutes at the end for comments; Sharon seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.
- c) **Vote interim positions, to be in effect through January 2024.** Will be discussed at the September meeting, with Kent present.
- d) Dave confirmed that all electronic forms of communication have been passed on to Interim Chair, and the current Chair's administrative role removed, including on the RAHC Facebook page.
- e) **8.3 Annual Town Report.** All town committees must file an annual report detailing Committee membership, including any changes, plus major accomplishments and plans, and attendance records. The reports are requested annually and due no later than the last September of each year regardless of notice. Sheryl and Kent to put together a draft, to be discussed at the September meeting.

f) Desegregate CT TOD walk on Saturday, July 29<sup>th</sup> at 10am, the same day as the town's SummerFest. Committee participation would not constitute a quorum.

**5. Public Comment:**

a) Jennifer Brakenwagen: Stated that CT has cut transit options out of Branchville, making train an unreliable transportation option.

b) Christine More: Asked how the new HEART bus line originated.

c) Kirk Carr: Indicated that some are exempt from the new inclusionary zoning regulations. Of the affordable units in town, a very small number are deeded in perpetuity. Suggested that the town steer clear of Desegregate CT regarding TOD at Branchville, and consider adding more voucher units.

**6. Review Previous Minutes:** Debra moved to accept the June 28, 2023 minutes as written; Krista seconded. Motion was unanimously approved.

**7. Next meeting:** The next Regular meeting is scheduled for September 27, since the August meeting is canceled.

**8. Adjourn:** Sheryl moved to adjourn; Debra seconded, and the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 9:20.

Prepared by Sheryl Knapp, Secretary

RIDGEFIELD AFFORDABLE HOUSE COMMITTEE  
 Report Card/Status/Next Steps  
 \*\* UPDATED 7/26/23 \*\*

	Evaluation/Status	Owner	Priority	Next Step
Review Multifamily Opportunities Through Zoning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simplify multifamily zoning districts</li> <li>• Consider expanding “middle housing” and multifamily conversions</li> <li>• Encourage second-floor residential in business district</li> </ul>	Plan only	Dave/P&Z	A	Limited work has been done on Form-Based Codes, but all others are embedded in PNZ regulations already in effect – e.g., incentives

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Form-Based Codes</li> </ul>				for second-floor residential in business districts.
Adopt an Inclusionary Zoning Regulation	Implemented	P&Z	A	Done (see minutes)
Develop additional assisted affordable housing units	Plan only	Dave/RHA	A	Town will provide input on the preliminary list of properties identified.
Halpin Lane “Mixed Housing”	In process	Kent	B	Ability Beyond continuing capital campaign to cover construction costs.
Promote Adaptive Reuse	Plan only	Dave/Rudy	B	There will be discussion regarding what to do with the old firehouse and police stations – perhaps create apartments, business use, or sell. Will require PNZ involvement for change of use.
Extending to Perpetuity	Plan only	Dave	C	Most current affordable properties are under 8-30g which establishes timeframe. PNZ receptive to investigating the possibility of making the new inclusionary zoning regulations to perpetuity.
Creating a Housing Trust Fund	Proposal	Dave	A	PNZ will put on agenda for an upcoming

				meeting since they now have a funding source with the inclusionary zoning regulation. There could also be funding from application fees.
Pursue ADU Deed Restriction	Plan only	Dave	A	Discussed potential tax incentives for registering ADUs.
Transit Oriented Development (TOD)	In process	TBD/Rudy Marconi	C	Rudy met with Julia Pemberton to discuss grant received to investigate Georgetown sewer plant. Projects are underway to make the area more pedestrian friendly.
CHFA Promotion and Assistance	In process	Debra	A	Debra to plan another informational session.
ADU Promotion and Assistance	Plan only	Whit/Krista	A	Whit and Krista updating materials.
Affordable Housing Web Page	Implemented	Debra/Sharon	A	Continue monitoring. CHFA web page. Social Services and others are referring people to page.
Increase Transportation Options	Plan only	Debra/Lori/Rudy	C	HART bus is running through town. There are no bus stops currently but it will drop riders along the route to and if

				flag bus down it will pick you up.
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