

## RIDGEFIELD AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE

### Meeting Minutes

February 22, 2023 – 7:00 PM

Town Hall – 400 Main Street, Ridgefield  
Small Conference Room, Lower Level

**PRESENT:** Dave Goldenberg (Chair), Kent Rohrer (Vice Chair), Sharon Coleman, Sheryl Knapp, and Krista Willett

**ABSENT:** Kevin Brown, Whit Campbell, Debra Franceschini-Gatje, and Lori Mazzola

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 PM.

**1. Public Comment:** none

**2. New Business:**

- a) **Email correspondence:** Dave reported that all relevant email correspondence had been distributed to members.
- b) **Discussion about Planning & Zoning's proposed inclusionary zoning:** Inclusionary zoning was on the agenda at P&Z's 2/21/23 meeting; no Committee member present was in attendance at the meeting. Dave believes the hearing is closed and they have 65 days from close of hearing to vote on it. P&Z's meeting minutes will be issued soon.
- c) **Other new business:** none

**3. Current Business:**

- a) **State feasibility study grant – next steps:** Dave spoke to the Commissioner of Housing to request that unused funds from the Prospect Ridge feasibility grant be used to explore other properties. The Commissioner indicated that the Committee must come up with a specific list of properties. Dave proposed that the Committee come up with a subcommittee to explore options and come up with a list. Kent asked if we can come up with a preliminary list to offer flexibility as things come up, but the list must include specific properties. Sheryl indicated that this would not be an exhaustive list of properties for the Committee to consider, but rather a more focused list of those for which grant money could be utilized. Krista asked if it must be a subgroup or a subcommittee; Dave will check. Dave to reach out to the full Committee to see who is interested.
- b) **Web presence – next steps.** Sharon reported that the project is in a holding pattern, as she needs to meet with Debra to review the validity of information Debra provided and input missing information. Dave proposed that the site go live with confirmed information, as there is an ongoing need for a place to send individuals to who request information, with additional information added as it is finalized.

- c) **Home for adults with disabilities at Halpin Lane and Prospect Ridge:** The Selectmen gifted use of the property to Ability Beyond a few years ago to develop a group home. Kent reported that Habitat for Humanity has reached out to Ability Beyond as a prospective partner, and AB has shown interest in moving forward, but it is in the formative stages. Because of state regulations, the construction will be very costly. At this point the Committee's role is very limited, and will hold off on communicating progress on the initiative.
- d) **Press policy, other operational concerns:** Debra had shared concerns about Dave's comments to the press. Kent proposed that Dave share with the Committee each time he is interviewed or knows that an article is being published in which he has provided a quote. Dave indicated that he gets calls on a frequent basis, and recently there was a significant misinterpretation of material in a *Ridgefield Press* story, so Dave had requested that the reporter call any time she has any uncertainty or questions regarding an affordable housing issue to hopefully prevent incorrect information from being published in the future. The issue will be revisited at the March meeting when more Committee members are present.

**4. Public Comment:**

- a) **Scott DeYoung:** With respect to looking at properties, the first item might be town owned properties. It is also important to determine whether the property owner is willing to sell the property for this purpose, and that there is excess sewage capacity available for properties in the sewer district. Kent explained that the purpose of the feasibility study is check issues like this. Dave indicated that there is some additional capacity in the sewer district.
- b) **Kirk Carr:** Was at the P&Z meeting on 2/21. With regard to inclusionary zoning, they discussed sticking with the sewer district and areas with public transportation. Also discussed was pay in lieu of and how much that would be. He thinks we should stick with the local need in terms of affordable housing, which he believes is low. He thinks that if there was more local need, there would be more 8-30g applications, and that we really do not have a good sense of what the local need is.

**5. Review Previous Minutes:** Kent moved to formally accept the minutes for the 9/14/2022, 9/28/2022, 10/26/2022, and 12/21/2022 meetings; all but the December minutes had been discussed at prior meetings. Sharon seconded. Motion was unanimously approved.

**6. Next meeting:** The next Regular meeting is scheduled for 03/22/2022.

**7. Adjourn:** Krista moved to adjourn; Kent seconded, and the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM.

Prepared by Sheryl Knapp, Secretary