07/26/2023

Public Testimony: Westport Cottage Cluster Draft Regulations

Dear Westport Planning and Zoning Committee,

I am writing to provide Testimony in support of the Westport Cottage Cluster Draft Regulations. At Fairfield County's Center for Housing Opportunity, we work to facilitate the production, preservation and protection of affordable housing choices for people of all income levels. We are excited about the innovative model of much needed diverse housing types that is proposed in the draft.

We encourage the Committee to consider the following items:

1. 32-29.1 Site Criteria: restricting it to town land and 32-29.10 CAP
   The Cottage Cluster is a smart, sustainable concept for producing more housing that is affordable, it is a pattern that has been used in both urban and suburban contexts. We recommend not capping or restricting to town owned land as the development of this type of housing will be naturally mediated by economics and site suitability.
2. Allowing duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes should be considered -it is a more efficient use of land, more cost effective and more sustainable. The units could be designed with individual porches and entrances to have the look of independent cottages, keeping the same scale as intended in ordinance and to provide a mix of homeowner and rental opportunities.
3. Reduction of parking requirements would greatly improve land use efficiency and sustainability and allow for flexibility in site planning.
4. There is no mention of a deed restriction for the affordability requirement or length of affordability period. This mechanism should be thoughtfully considered as applied to affordable rental and homeownership opportunities.
5. The Cottage Cluster is a great model to consider for shared equity homeownership, to reduce cost to residents and ensure long term affordability.

We support the intent and goals of this draft and encourage the committee to consider the incorporating above recommendations.

Sincerely,

Aicha Woods, Director, FCCHO