



Planning & Zoning Commission

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Minutes

Planning and Zoning Commission's Zoning Regulation Revision/Affordable Housing Subcommittee

Wednesday, October 16, 2024 at 12:00 pm

No physical location. The meeting was held electronically.

P&Z Commissioners in Attendance:

Paul Lebowitz, P&Z Commission Vice Chair, Zoning Regulation Revision Subcommittee Member
Michael Cammeyer, P&Z Commission Member, Zoning Regulation Revision Subcommittee Member
Amy Wistreich, P&Z Commission Member
Michael Calise, P&Z Commission Member

Planning & Zoning Staff in Attendance:

Michelle Perillie, Planning and Zoning Director
Amanda Trianovich, Deputy Planning and Zoning Director

Jen Tooker, First Selectwoman

Members of the Public In Attendance:

Matthew Mandell, RTM member	Cathy Walsh, Westport Resident	Tom Foran
Ron Corwin, Westport Resident	Dr. J	John Schwing
Phil Levieff, Westport Resident	Brian Baxendale	Gloria Gouveia
Becky Martin, Affordable Housing Committee	Gail Kelly, Affordable Housing Committee	Sal Liccione, RTM District #1 Member
Rick Redniss, Redniss and Mead	David Pinto, Redniss and Mead	Dave Ginter, Redniss and Mead

Agenda

1. Discussion of draft text amendment to modify §40, Dedicated Open Space and Recreation District (DOSRD).

Ms. Perillie discussed the potential use of the buildings at Baron's South and how the subcommittee came to the current proposal to create a Special Permit use in the DOSRD #2 for Adaptive Re-Use of Existing Building to Residential Development.

Mr. Lebowitz discussed the identification of town land for housing since the land is free.

Jen Tooker, First Selectwoman, discussed the fact that she has been looking at town assets to develop housing in concert with Affordable Housing Plan adopted in 2022. The proposed text amendment which would allow renovation of the five buildings on Baron's South to multifamily dwellings. She stated the units would be efficiency units to 3-bedroom units, there would be a parking requirement reduction, the units would be 100% affordable, the sewer capacity would need to be explored and utilities would be underground.

Mr. Lebowitz described the coordination needed for this project to succeed.

Ms. Perillie discussed density, floor area expansion, reduction in parking similar to other multifamily districts, and stated from a planning perspective it's a great use of the buildings. She also discussed the existing permitted uses and the proposal to modify the existing buildings.

Ms. Tooker stated the vision is to use the existing building footprints and described of the five buildings two are used for housing and three are vacant. She indicated there could be between 19-22 units in total and the units would be 100% affordable. Ms. Tooker described the need to upgrade ingress/egress and parking as a result. She stated developing this property would provide residents great access to downtown with buildings we have struggled to find appropriate use for. Ms. Tooker indicated that as a town we need to diversify our housing stock.

Mr. Lebowitz stated this would bring the buildings to better condition.

Ms. Tooker stated there is no proposal to change the exterior of the buildings.

Ms. Perillie stated there could be between 30-50 moratorium points generated from these units.

Mr. Cammeyer asked how many moratorium points are needed for the next moratorium.

Ms. Perillie stated we will need 158 points for the next moratorium and have 59.7 units constructed and about 70 under construction.

Ms. Tooker wants to diversify housing in our community and to convert town owned land to housing shows commitment beyond just talking about it. She stated this is very important and she will continue to pursue this opportunity.

Ms. Wistreich stated that theoretically she is behind this idea.

Public Comment

Ms. Walsh stated she would like to see the text amendment be hashed out in subcommittee instead of in a public hearing.

Mr. Liccione requested a tour of the site and stated that fire safety needs to be explored.

Mr. Lebowitz stated that right now we are just introducing the concept and crafting the regulation and if we want to do a field trip we can do that later.

Mr. Mandell, RTM P&Z Chair, stated this is a great plan and the Affordable Housing Committee should consider using the funds from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Mr. Corwin stated this is very much in the direction the P&ZC has sought to address these issues and this is a big step in a constructive direction.

Mr. Lebowitz stated we will have another meeting within the month with draft text amendment to discuss.

2. Status report on affordable housing developments and balance of the Affordable Trust Fund.

Ms. Trianovich stated the Affordable Housing Trust Fund is now \$626,290.

Mr. Lebowitz stated when the Commission was considering this, they guessed we would hit \$700,000 by the end of the year but we may surpass that.

Mr. Cammeyer and Mr. Lebowitz complimented the members of the Affordable Housing Committee.

3. Other topics

Rick Redniss, Redniss and Mead, discussed how he had used fee-in-lieu money from 41 Richmondville Ave to rehab the building at 136 Riverside Avenue for Special Needs Housing and generated 2.5 points per unit. This was a great example of public-private partnership. Fee-in-lieu funds were used on 1141 Post Road East to buy two single family homes. Mr. Redniss showed an example of a project in Darien. He discussed the multifamily project at 793 Post Road East and explained the owner would like to create off-site affordable housing. He would like to propose a text change to do several things including modifying the definition of Special Needs Housing to include autistic individuals, identifying this would apply to town owned land and modifying the IHZ regulation to allow off-site housing.

Public Comment

Mr. Mandell stated the town has been moving toward requiring affordable units on-site and if we do move them off-site we may need 25% for fee-in-lieu, instead of 20%.

Ms. Wistreich stated she is in favor of doing this.

Mr. Cammeyer stated he felt if they are going to allow off-site there should be more in it for the town.

Ms. Wistreich stated she thinks they should keep units on-site instead of off-site.

Mr. Lebowitz stated he is not in favor of off-site affordable units but if they do it 25% requirement may justify that.

Mr. Calise stated existing multifamily is already affordable but not technically per state and when it is deed restricted it reduces market rate housing stock in favor of affordable housing.

Mr. Redniss stated he sees it as protecting an affordable unit since it would be then be deed restricted.

Mr. Lebowitz thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 12:59 pm.

A full audio recording of the meeting is archived and available on the Town of Westport's website, [here](#).

Respectfully Submitted By:

Michelle Perillie, Planning and Zoning Director

October 23, 2024