

Lyme Affordable Housing Commission Meeting October 5, 2020

This meeting was conducted via ZOOM. Electronically present: Tim Hildner (Chair), Christine Darnell, Carol House, Steve Mattson, and Tina West.

Visitor: Judy Ulrich

Hildner called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm.

The minutes of the September 14 meeting were accepted as posted.

Old Business:

Public Education Initiative: The Town issued a website announcement last Friday about the Apartment Conversion for the Elderly (ACE) program. The material describing the program is now permanently housed on the Affordable Housing Commission's portion of the Town's website. The Commission has also been offered space in future Selectmen's newsletters for small pieces and public service announcements.

Affordable Housing Rental Model: The Commission continues to work toward a feasible model that will encourage the availability of affordable rentals. Judy Ulrich was asked to provide her experience as a Lyme homeowner who has rented several rooms in her home. Ulrich has also had experience hosting a registered B&B. Ulrich discussed with the Commission the pros and cons, from the landlord perspective, of enrolling her rental into an affordable housing program. Issues important to her included: whether the monetary return to her within the program would be somewhat equivalent to what she can receive now outside of the program; the current requirement for a separate egress for the rental unit; the installation of kitchen facilities; and the need to make the final decision to whom she was comfortable renting a space in her home.

The Commission looked at new tables prepared by Hildner and continued to discuss alternative ways to establish a reasonable level of town financial support which would allow the rental unit to qualify as affordable housing while maintaining a reasonable return to the landlord.

Ruth Young Property: The Commission has considered the possibility of having an affordable duplex built on this property. Hildner reported that he has worked through a number of issues the Town would face in moving in this direction. He recommends further thought, and to have these issues addressed within the context of a Lyme Affordable Housing Plan. Hildner also said that an individual has shown interest in an affordable single-family home on this property.

Affordable Housing Plan: Lyme is required by state statute to have an official Affordable Housing Plan. This plan will need to be developed through a combined effort of the Affordable Housing Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission. Mattson suggests that we begin by learning from the State and other towns about the process of creating such a plan, seeing if the State has specific guidelines on what is included in the plan, and which part of the Town government is responsible. A suggestion was made that we may need to hire a consultant to help us determine the real needs of the town. West agreed to monitor how the State is moving on this issue.

New Members for the Commission: We continue to look for new members on the Commission. We are particularly interested in balancing the membership with additional Republicans.

New Business:

Future Sites – Land Availability: The Commission talked some about the long-term goal of identifying land that might be available for affordable housing in the future. The availability of senior housing is becoming more important. Mattson said that the Open Space Commission keeps up these issues.

Other: None was discussed.

Hildner adjourned the meeting at 6:48 pm.

Next meeting: November 9 at 5 pm. This will be a Zoom meeting.

Respectively submitted,
Carol House