

**TOWN OF EAST HAVEN
AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
MARCH 10, 2022
HELD VIA ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE AND CONFERENCE CALL**

Attorney Jennifer Coppola called the special meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

I. Roll call

Attorney Coppola introduced Sotonye Otunba-Payne as the new clerk.

The committee members were introduced as follows:

Louis Fusco - Present

Paul Salisbury - Present

Amy Derbacher - Present

Regina Comfort Rodriguez - Present

Wendy Bellmore - Absent

Michael Luzzi (via Zoom conference call) - Town Attorney

Joseph Budrow - Planning and Zoning Administrator and Zoning Enforcement Officer

Attorney Jennifer Coppola - Assistant Town Attorney

Members of the public present:

Visitor A

Karen Martin

II. Discussion of Status of Housing Plan Survey

Attorney Coppola indicated that the Housing Plan Survey had been posted on the Town of East Haven's website. It has been sent to the committee members. The survey had also been sent to council members as well.

Attorney Coppola implored the committee members to send the survey to any organization belonging to the town to post on their social media pages as well as any community Facebook groups or other social media groups. The survey link is okay to post. A photograph of the flyer could be posted on social media as well.

There are physical locations with paper surveys to ensure that everyone can participate. The paper copy of the survey could be requested at the mayor's office as well. She has put paper copies, some flyers as well as a collection box in the town hall and also the library. She will take some to the senior center on March 11, 2022. Most people will participate electronically. She would electronically input the answers to the survey made on paper also. There have been 50 responses to the survey. She anticipates several hundred responses to the survey with the strategy of distribution that she had

used. No stone will be left unturned, so to speak, in terms of getting the surveys out there. There was an ad in the Courier on March 10, 2022.

Mr. Salisbury indicated that he thought the survey was nicely done.

Attorney Coppola indicated it would be a good idea for the committee to hold an informational session for the public to discuss affordable housing and get into sharing some of the details regarding the demographics provided by RKG Associates, Inc., with regard to the town. It would not be in addition to the scheduled meetings. The committee members' attendance would be optional.

III. Discussion of Community Values Statement

Attorney Coppola indicated that the town did not receive a value Statement from RKG Associated, Inc. So, the committee will craft one. She included samples in the package distributed to the committee members so they could take a look and get a sense of what is in the value statement. There is a statement of value that defines this municipality as an introduction. And then there is a description of how housing has developed in the town. The definition of housing needs could be included here with goals.

This is a five-year plan. It is meant to be a progressive process. It is something that should be embraced as a concept. It's a very complicated process to construct affordable housing. There are a lot of elements and considerations that come into play to do it successfully. So, the committee may not necessarily come up with a plan that's going to take you where maybe you need to be as a community to meet all needs within the next five years.

A roadblock now, what is going on with the housing market, is that there is just simply not enough housing stock. This will certainly impact what all the towns are trying to do through their individual plans.

Ms. Comfort Rodriguez indicated that a lot of buyers do desire to live in East Haven. There are 10 offers for each home on the market. There are so many people desperate to purchase home. The Town of East Haven needs some single -family detached homes for these new, young families looking to purchase a home. Ownership is more affordable than renting at this point, unfortunately.

Attorney Luzzi indicated that there are a lot of financing opportunities out there for young families. The FHA programs are really expansive. There are a number of veterans' programs. There are single-digit housing stock communities like East Haven all over the state. People do want to own homes.

Attorney Coppola indicated that one of the things they have to consider as a strategy is to ensure that the committee includes an educational piece for folks who might be looking in town to educate them about the potential sources of financing as well.

Attorney Luzzi said there are lots of folks that need to be educated about this. Ms.

Comfort Rodriguez concurred.

Attorney Coppola spoke about what things make East Haven desirable. She asked what the core values are in East Haven.

Discussions regarding what makes East Haven more desirable ensued.

Mr. Salisbury indicated that he thought this was a multi-faceted issue.

Mr. Fusco mentioned that as the population of the town ages, there is a great need for age-restricted senior housing. Ms. Comfort Rodriguez concurred and added that the committee should address this issue as well.

Attorney Coppola stated that affordability for seniors is a challenge.

There were discussions about non-restricted housing and what characteristics these houses should have.

IV Discussion of Draft Housing Goals and Strategies

Attorney Coppola indicated that some of the goals were in the documents she provided the committee.

In addition, Attorney Coppola mentioned the following bullet points:

- Preserve and maintain the town's existing affordable housing stock.
- Encourage affordable housing for families and individuals who cannot afford current market-rate housing prices.
- Allow for affordable housing development in appropriate areas of the town which could include areas that revitalize or strengthen existing neighborhoods, are close to the town center, are along transient route, and areas proximate to services.
- Continue to diversify the town's housing stock by supporting the development of two- and three-family structures, townhomes and condominiums that would offer opportunities for both homeownership and rental housing.
- Provide housing options that support seniors who would like to remain in East Haven.
- Utilize a variety of funding sources ... to rehabilitate housing in existing neighborhoods.
- Where possible, encourage the clustering of affordable housing units to preserve and provide open spaces for residents to enjoy.
- Ensure the town's land use and zoning regulations are in alignment with the goals and strategies of the Affordable Housing Plan.
- Promote resident education, communication, and discussion about implementing the Affordable Housing Plan.

Mr. Budrow indicated that the bullets points were more boiler plate. It would be good to tailor it to the Town of East Haven.

Mr. Budrow mentioned the following goals the committee could consider:

- Encourage and maintain a housing stock that will make life comfortable and enjoyable for the elderly.
- Encourage and maintain a housing stock that will attract young families and professionals to town.

Mr. Budrow spoke about public transportation such as there being no train service in East Haven. In addition, more houses should be built toward the center of town near bus lines. They could add bicycle routes.

He also added that he like this as a goal, establish a network of town staff who can promote affordable housing in a positive way. Attorney Coppola indicated that this was in the strategy section.

Mr. Budrow added that one of the goals would be to modify the Zoning Regulations to allow a wide array of housing types in a more organized manner within residential and commercial zones.

Attorney Coppola went on to share and address some of the comprehensive list of all of potential strategies that RKG Associate , Inc., and SCRCOG came up with. They request that the committee use the drop-down menu within the document to note whether or not the committee would like to include a particular strategy that's listed. They have requested that this be submitted by March 18, 2022. Attorney Coppola further indicated that she would like the committee to focus on this in preparation for the next meeting during which these would be further discussed.

Attorney Coppola said, it is of note that some of the strategies get into the realm of Planning and Zoning's authority. The committee will need to have the Planning and Zoning Commission's input to indicate what its preferences are.

Attorney Coppola went on to discuss the different strategies, such as the education component, establishing a committee, etc. The Planning and Zoning Commission is aware of what is going on with this committee.

Ms. Derbacher indicated in the chat that she liked the idea of the committee continuing even after the plan is submitted.

Attorney Coppola responded by saying that part of the statute is that the committee review its plan, and prepare and submit a new plan every five years. So, the statutory obligation does not end with just the submission of this plan for June 1st. It is a good idea to keep the committee ongoing for the purpose of taking periodic status.

Attorney Coppola spoke about the town having a landlord registration ordinance that appears there is not a great deal of compliance with.

Attorney Coppola indicated that the town's regulations do not currently allow accessory apartments. The Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission are reviewing some documents that they have to act on if they decide to opt out of the legislation. It's an opt-out piece of legislation. This is something that is underway.

A meeting with the Planning and Zoning Commission will be scheduled so that it can offer you its opinions on these strategies that have been received.

She further discussed the different strategies. Mr. Budrow exited the meeting as he had another meeting to attend.

There were discussions about employers assisting employees to purchase homes as a strategy.

Attorney Coppola requested that the committee go over these strategies.

V. Discussion of Future Committee Meetings

There were discussions about scheduling future meetings.

VI. Public Comments

Ms. Martin asked in the chat, how do we find housing we are not getting credit for?

Attorney Coppola responded that this was difficult. The town could start by educating its citizens that the landlord registration ordinance is in existence. This is one way to get information regarding this issue.

Attorney Coppola indicated that she would add election of officers to the joint meeting agenda at the next meeting.

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Salisbury motioned to adjourn. Said motion was seconded by Mr. Fusco. The motion passed unanimously.

The next scheduled meeting is on March 16, 2022.
The Committee adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sotonye Otunba-Payne