

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
LISBON TOWN HALL
TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2022
7:00 P.M.

1. Roll Call - The regular meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission was called to order by Chairman Robert Adams at 7:05 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Adams, Randy Brown, Ronald Giroux (Remote), Benjamin Hull, III, Jason Lebel, Veronica Lutzen, Timothy Minor, Kim Sperry, (ALT),
MEMBERS ABSENT: Trevor Danburg, Nathaniel Beardsworth (ALT), Cheryl Blanchard (ALT), Gary Ritacco (ALT)
STAFF PRESENT: Michael J. Murphy, AICP, Consultant Planner-SCCOG, Lisbon Town Planner (Remote), Carl Brown, Zoning Enforcement Official / Building Official
OTHERS PRESENT: Carly Holzschuh, AICP - Planner-SCCOG

2. Affordable Housing Plan Survey – Ms. Carly Holzschuh, AICP of the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments, was present. She presented the Commission with a revised draft Affordable Housing Plan Survey. She outlined the addition of a description of what affordable housing means, and clarified changes made to some of the survey's questions, per the Commission's comments made at the last special meeting. Mrs. Sperry noted survey numbers three (#3) and five (#5) still need further clarification. #3 should specify, "what are YOUR challenges" to housing in Lisbon, so that the Commission receives answers specific to the individual responding to the survey. #5 needs to clarify what CHFA and USDA actually are - fixed rate mortgages for first time home buyers, for example. Mrs. Sperry stated that it is important that those taking the survey understand what those programs are. The survey should also have a question asking to indicate whether or not the person taking the survey is a Lisbon resident. Ms. Holzschuh stated that she will make the necessary changes and will re-submit the survey to Mr. Murphy for distribution to the Commission for final comments. Once the consensus is that the survey is ready to go online, it will be advertised on the Town website, on social media pages, and other possible avenues. It should be available to the public for about two weeks, after which the results will be submitted to the Commission at their April 6th special meeting.
3. Discussion of Affordable Housing Plan - Ms. Holzschuh presented an Affordable Housing Plan PowerPoint presentation, dated 3/8/2022. She reported that Lisbon is currently at 3.5% of 8-30g housing. Properties purchased with CHFA or USDA first-time homebuyer grants count towards 8-30g. There are currently 58 deed-restricted homes in Lisbon.

Mrs. Sperry noted that there are grant programs available that allow for an incentive for property owners to deed restrict, and cited an example with Breckenridge, Colorado. She questioned Ms. Holzschuh as to whether or not the Town of Lisbon could qualify for these grants. Ms. Holzschuh noted that it could be looked into but that there is a process to grant writing, and that it would be in the best interest of the Town to consider the services of a grant writer if the Town wanted to pursue this further.

Mr. Hull asked for the statistics of people leaving their houses and moving into apartments. Ms. Holzschuh replied that she would send Mr. Murphy a report of general trends for the Planner to share with the Commission. Mr. Giroux noted that total community populations affect the percentages of Affordable Housing and Ms. Holzschuh concurred with him, stating that it is, in fact, difficult for smaller towns such as

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Page 2 (cont)

Lisbon to reach that 10% of affordable housing. She noted that the assisted living for seniors' sector is a reasonable option for smaller towns to reach that 10% level. Chairman Adams asked if mobile homes count towards affordable housing, noting that the Town already had a large number of trailer homes, including a trailer park for 55+. Ms. Holzschu stated she will do some research and will report back.

Ms. Holzschu noted that other neighboring towns have "floating" zones which offer a friendly way for the developer to traverse the permitting process. Streamlining the permitting process could be an incentive for developers to propose affordable housing. Mr. Murphy stated that he spoke with Ms. Holzschu about considering a "hard" zone approach in the corridor on the north side of 395 along Route 12, by including provisions for multi-family and other residential developments while limiting densities. He noted these provisions would have to be added to the regulations in a way that protected the ability to still provide for appropriate commercial development along with addressing housing needs of the community.


Mrs. Sperry noted that the numbers presented on the PowerPoint presentation for school enrollment at Lisbon Central School needs to be looked at, as she does not believe these numbers are accurate, appearing to be too high. Ms. Holzschu stated that these numbers were derived from the Connecticut Department of Education website and that these numbers do, in fact, represent K-8, according to the website.

Mr. Murphy responded about some comments sent to him earlier by a Commission member about the survey. The member is concerned that introducing affordable housing in Town would actually increase the number of children burdening the school system, with less tax revenue. Mr. Murphy noted that statistically, larger and often single family homes with three or more bedrooms tend to have larger families, while smaller, two bedroom apartments tend to have fewer children. He then noted that the term "Affordable Housing" should not be misinterpreted or stereotyped as "Low-Income Housing", as many municipal workers need affordable or workforce housing. The Planner indicated that good design standards are the key since affordable housing should not be discernible from market rate housing.

Mr. Hull questioned how a tenant in an "affordable housing" unit or apartment remains in that unit if their income rises. Ms. Holzschu stated that the tenants' circumstances are reviewed each year and that any change in income must be reported. Although Ponemah Mills in Taftville is a good example of this kind of project, she also noted that the city of Norwich received a tremendous amount of State funding for it. Tenants that reach their limit in restricted units would have to move out of those units, either moving up into costlier units, or into other forms of housing.

Mr. Hull asked for clarification of the term "density bonus". Mr. Murphy clarified saying that a development standard would allow a certain number of units per acre, but the density bonus would allow for a percentage over that standard, as an incentive to construct affordable housing units as well. Mr. Lebel noted that having an incentive to build affordable housing is better than mandating it.

4. Adjournment – Motion by R. Giroux second by K. Sperry to adjourn at 8:26 PM.


Elaine Joseph, clerk

Approved by: _____
Robert D. Adams, Chairman

RECEIVED FOR RECORD AT LISBON
CT ON 3/10/2022 AT 10:30am
ATTEST. LAURIE TIROCCHI, TOWN CLERK
