

Woodbridge Housing Committee Regular Meeting

January 4, 2023

These minutes are constructed from Notes provided by Committee Chair Kathleen Hunter

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The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Central Meeting Room by Chair Kathleen Hunter.

In attendance: Nicole Donzello, Dwight Rowland, Elaine Feldman, Mary Dean, and Chair Kathy Hunter
Staff: Kristine Sullivan

Kathy reviewed minutes of December 7th. Discussed that P&Z Board Chair would like a presentation of the Housing Committee Recommendations. We should plan that for their March meeting. Mary asks if this would include changes to the POCD, but Kathy thought not yet. Zoning Regulations are being reformatted and updated generally, so that is what needs attention at this time.

Discussed how the Ordinance Committee of the BOS is drafting an inclusionary zoning ordinance. Kris advised that such ordinances should go through P&Z. She will bring this up to the Ordinance Committee, so they don't waste efforts on areas where they have no jurisdiction. Suggested that the areas they could help us include developing tax incentive programs and other incentives such as a waiver of permitting fees for building affordable housing.

Discussed preparation for January 17th meeting. People and groups to contact included Father Glen at the Assumption Church; Jeanette Glicksman at Human Services who is connected with the senior population and people in need of services; Caty Poole, Massaro Farms; B'nai Jacob; Steven Lawrence, who is on DEI and the Board of Ed; Ellen Scalettar, who chairs DEI; and Sheila McCreven who is involved with many town committees including BOS.

Discussed how a pamphlet to hand out to provide an overview of Affordable housing, defining it for Woodbridge, pictures of what it looks like, could be beneficial for discussions and making it easier for people to understand.

Kathy reviewed a handout from the Partnership on Strong Communities – Ten Actions to Grow Your Town's Affordable Housing Supply. Some actions that could be useful for Woodbridge could be 1) creating a local housing trust (perhaps funded by developers who want to opt out of affordable housing requirements), 2) Modifying local zoning to lower minimum lot size requirements. Discussed how there is a reliance on a report from 1989 from DEEP that recommends 2-acre zoning for areas in a watershed. 3) Dedicating town owned land to affordable housing development. This process should be facilitated by the project CUPOP is doing for identifying town-owned land, which may help identify potentially suitable sites. 4) Targeting existing community development funds to rehab and deed-restrict existing housing. This could be good for some of the naturally occurring affordable housing that has been discussed, to bring them up to housing quality standards and then have the properties deed restricted. 5) Create an incentive housing zone (IHZ), a zoning overlay that allows increased housing density in exchange for creating mixed-income housing. This program would provide Woodbridge with control over the location, amount, type, and design of the homes created. Incentive payments from the state would be made to Woodbridge once the zone is approved and again when housing is built.

Kathy suggested that she could invite Sean Ghio, who was instrumental in preparing this handout, to the next meeting so we could discuss these actions in more depth. The committee thought that would be a good idea.

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Kathy mentioned that the SCRCOG's December Regional Housing Task Force Meeting was on promoting Transit Oriented Development, which is not that relatable to Woodbridge. Interesting thought: expand bus lines. Kathy strongly recommended that the group partake in SCRCOG's meeting January 25th which will be on the Nitty Gritty Details of Wastewater Management in New Developments.