

SALISBURY AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

FEBRUARY 15, 2024 – 5:30PM (VIA ZOOM)

1. Call to Order. Present: Jennifer Kronholm Clark, Katie White, Lee Sullivan, Pat Hackett, Jim Dresser and Abeth Slotnick. Absent: Vivian Garfein, Mary Close Oppenheimer and Jon Higgins.
2. Approval of Agenda. So Moved by L. Sullivan and seconded by K. White. A. Slotnick asked to add an Item: “Commission Review of Memo of Understanding from the NW CT Housing Association.” The Item will be added as number 5.a. The **Motion to Approve the Agenda, as amended**, was unanimously **Approved**.
3. **Approval of Minutes January 18, 2024. So Moved** by J. Dresser, seconded by L. Sullivan and unanimously **Approved**.

4. Coordinator’s Report. One inquiry about an affordable rental was received and referred to CREM.

5. Community Survey Options – Jocelyn Ayer, Litchfield County Center for Housing Opportunity (LCCHO)

Ms. Ayer described the grant funding available to help facilitate and spur collaboration among different stakeholders within our communities. One collaboration in the Town of Kent, between Kent Affordable Housing and the Kent Volunteer Fire Department, is regarding AH needs. Similar surveys could be done in Salisbury, if useful, now or in the future. Ms. Ayer suggested that doing regular surveys is a way of getting community participation; this would be another option. Regarding the workforce housing set-aside, the State Housing Credit Tax Program; the maximum amount is \$500k, which is helpful, but mostly goes to Eversource. The program is run through CHFA, the CT Housing Finance Authority; there is a once-a-year application for these tax credits, but it is never used because there has to be a marketing strategy for people who work only in the town. Other funding might be available that doesn’t have those strings attached. J. Dresser asked how this gets around fair housing laws; Ms. Ayer responded that there are policies and programs that conflict with one another and that no one has tapped into this program indicates that it is too hard to use. J. Kronholm Clark mentioned that this type of survey is interesting, but not an urgent need. Ms. Ayer suggested that M. Close Oppenheimer may have a lot of the information; working with the Economic Development Committee and the Tri-State Chamber of Commerce was also mentioned. L. Sullivan commented on the responses received from the Salisbury Affordable Housing Plan; there were not that many respondents from employees or employers. K. White asked when and where the data would be used; Ms.

Ayer responded that the responses in Kent have been informative. J. Kronholm Clark suggested moving this Item to Subcommittee #8. Housing Affordability Committee.

5.a. Northwest Ct Housing Association Memo of Understanding – Jocelyn Ayer

Ms. Ayer described the Association as a group of local housing organizations, including non-profits and town commissions that meet 4 times per year. Attendees cannot be a quorum of members, per FOIA; there should only be one representative from the SAHC. The Memo gives the details of what participation involves; the LCCHO is a member, not the organizer. J. Kronholm Clark will sign the Memo of Agreement and noted that SAHC attendees can rotate each time there is a meeting. A Motion to Become a Member of the NWCTHA was made by J. Dresser, seconded by A. Slotnick and unanimously Approved.

6. Refresher: FOI and Ethics

J. Kronholm Clark commented that if there are specific questions regarding FOIA, they can have a guest speaker. Basics include: per Town ethics, no member benefits financially; per FOIA, the public has to have access to meetings; subcommittee meetings are meetings that must be posted; no business discussions or decision-making over email; it is OK to share information, but not substantive responses. J. Kronholm Clark indicated that the SAHC is doing well with this and reminded all not to go into concerns in email; gathering information is OK. Kitty Kiefer, Selectman, suggested leaving out opinions and substantive issues. J. Kronholm Clark suggested being open and transparent.

7. Discussion: 2024 Goals and Subcommittees

- 1) Housing Committee Properties – Peter Halle (SHC) reported that all 4 active projects are moving forward. Sarum Village III is on target. Dresser Woods will be on the P&Z agenda 2/20/2024, with Jocelyn Ayer representing the SHC; the Public Hearing will be continued in March. Bids have come in from 5 contractors for Holley Place and are much higher than expected. The Lakeview Apartments are getting organized for the interior work. A. Slotnick commented that the Board of Selectmen has a bid for a Small Cities grant for the infrastructure at Dresser Woods.
- 2) Pope Property – A. Slotnick reported that final revisions of the concept design are being done. There may be a letter from the Pope Land Design Committee (PLDC) in the Lakeville Journal next week. There may also be a public meeting sometime in the spring. J. Dresser suggested having a more detailed specific response from the PLDC; A. Slotnick suggested that it might be better if one of the recipients of email responded to those. J. Kronholm Clark and A. Slotnick pointed out that Curtis Rand had already addressed some of the specific concerns.
- 3) Housing Trust Properties – J. Kronholm Clark reported there wasn't much new; Perry St. is in progress; Grove St. is being worked on, regarding next steps after the 8-24 review.
- 4) Advocacy for AH – Comments from members included:

- Email planned for the PZC meeting re: Dresser Woods; that will also be mentioned in the next newsletter. H. Pouler is working on editorial content to talk about the process for getting projects approved and when public comment is appropriate.
 - The subcommittee will find time to work on the survey.
 - Discussion about a new strategy for addressing misinformation and making sure correct information gets put into the newsletter.
 - The Litchfield County Center for Housing Opportunity has good strategies to promote AH and constructive ways to approach it.
 - There will be a letter of support for Dresser Woods to the PZC from this Commission.
- 5) Fundraising/Alternative Funding Sources – J. Dresser and J. Higgins will be meeting with some people in Great Barrington to learn about resources.
 - 6) Explore Additional Properties – The subcommittee did not meet; they will re-schedule for April.
 - 7) Sustainability Committee – A. Slotnick mentioned that they are getting a consultant involved and getting costs for Dresser Woods. J. Dresser mentioned there may be a possible donor.
 - 8) Housing Affordability Committee – Need to organize.
8. Communications Consultant Update / Monthly Newsletter
L. Sullivan has taken the notes for the newsletter.
 9. Public Comment – Kitty Kiefer suggested that the questionnaire/survey include the self-employed, when analyzing.
 10. Chairman’s Comments – J. Kronholm Clark mentioned that the Town is refunding a recent contribution, which had conditions with it, to the donor.
 11. **Adjournment. So Moved** by P. Hackett, seconded by K. White and unanimously **Approved**.