



Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments

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Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments and Lower Connecticut River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization

MINUTES OF REGIONAL HOUSING COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, July 25, 2023 – 2:00 PM

Members & Alternates Present: Pat Bandzes (Chester), Bonnie Bennet (Chester), Daniel Smith (Deep River), Roy Gauthier (East Hampton), Jeremy DeCarli (East Hampton), David Rosengren (Essex), Carey Duques (Essex), Richard Pleines (Killingworth), David Lahm (Lyme), Jim Irish (Middlefield), Marek Kozikowski (Middletown), Michael Fogliano (Old Lyme), Dan Bourret (Portland)

Others Present: John Guskowski (various towns), Nicholas Pappadopolous

RiverCOG Staff Present: Megan Jouflas, Eliza LoPresti, Susie Beckman, Kevin Armstrong

Call To Order

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Jouflas at 2:00 p.m. The meeting was held in person and via Zoom video conference.

Approval of Minutes of June 27, 2023 Meeting

Mr. Lahm moved to approve the minutes of the June 27, 2023 meeting; second by Mr. Smith. Vote was unanimous in favor.

Election of Officers

There were no volunteers for officer positions yet.

Website Update

Ms. Bandzes and Mr. Guskowski volunteered to be part of the website committee. Ms. Jouflas received story map info from Old Lyme and 8-30 info from Ms. Bandzes; these will be integrated into the website.

ADU Information

Ms. Jouflas showed the table that she created which includes a breakdown of each town's ADU regulation (except for one) and has columns for tracking ADUs. There was discussion on the use of this table internally, with a possible use for an outward facing component to be figured out in the future. Ms. Jouflas pointed out some of the interesting finds that arose from looking at all the regulations. Members are asked to take a look at the table and make sure everything about their regulation is accurate and to fill in any columns that staff did not, such as fees and/or utility hook ups.

There was then discussion on whether ADUs were treated as multi-families, and what makes an ADU an ADU. Mr. Guskowski shared an ADU fact sheet that was created for

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Deep River and will let us use that as a customizable template for other towns. This will be included in the toolkit.

Toolkit Ideas

ADU information is underway. Ms. Jouflas put up some suggestions for the next topic(s) to tackle for the toolkit. They include: adaptive reuse, conservation subdivisions, consolidated parking, cottage clusters, inclusionary zoning, planned residential developments, single family conversion, transit-oriented development, and small lot ordinances and density adjustments. The next topics staff will work on will be inclusionary zoning and single-family conversions.

Formation of Municipal Housing Committees and/or Commissions – Lyme & Old Lyme

Mr. Lahm explained the formation of Lyme’s Housing Committee by resolution about 15 years ago. They have 9 active and engaged members that are diversified by skill set, including a realtor, a finance person, a local historian, and others. Members are appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Lyme has a long history of affordable housing, with 12 units the town did and habitat for humanity projects. He noted that the town runs on volunteers, particularly their emergency services, and in order to cultivate volunteers for the betterment of the town, housing stock diversity is needed.

The committee is looking into a program such as those in Groton and Stonington in which they could offer low to no interest loans for home improvements in return for signing and affordable deed for up to 10 years. The goal of the committee is to increase the affordable housing stock in Lyme. The committee is advisory. They do have a special fund of about \$200,000, in order to spend it they would need to go to town meeting. They are charged with purchasing property and want to partner with HOPE Partnership, but they are not sure about the rural aspect.

Mr. Fogliano discussed Old Lyme’s Housing Commission. Before formation of the commission, Old Lyme had a not-for-profit affordable housing group that constructed 3 deed restricted units that were eventually absorbed by HOPE Partnership. After HOPE proposed some affordable housing that was voted down in town, a study committee was begun by some citizens and endorsed by the Board of Selectmen. It was a one-year study that recommended a permanent commission, which was established by ordinance in 2021. There are 8 total members; the commission is advisory and charged with planning, exploring, and recommending action. They do not have any resources to fund or run programs. Instead, they make connections by finding opportunities, educating the community, and recommending regulatory changes to make Old Lyme more conducive to affordable housing. They are also a diversified group of volunteers. Old Lyme also explored establishing a housing authority, but they have not done it. It is more beneficial to have two separate but coordinated entities in that case.

Updates From Members

Ms. Bandzes updated everyone that the developers for the property on 154 that was discussed at last meeting did file their application. There will be a public hearing on Sept. 14th. This led into a discussion of what a “friendly” 8-30g process might entail and

questions on conditions on 8-30g applications. It might be good to include a discussion with a land use attorney about this topic in a future meeting.

Topics For Next Meeting

Mr. Smith will look into Deep River's housing authority and possibly talk about it in August. Mr. Bourret and Mr. Kozikowski will discuss Portland and Middletown's housing authorities.

Future Series

Mr. Lahm discussed the draft fair share methodology that OPM is creating. Mr. Guzkowski noted that he has been approached to be on the steering committee for this purpose, which hasn't formed yet. He stated that the committee will welcome thoughts from different sectors of the state. Ms. Jouflas noted that the RHC will also create a methodology in the hopes that it will hold some weight with the state. She also brought up the idea of having people from other states that have already created housing needs assessments come speak to the RHC about their methodology.

HOPE Partnership was discussed as a good organization to come talk to the RHC about their work, as well as the Middlesex Chamber's affordable housing group. Another idea was to discuss septic in regards to development opportunities.

Adjournment

Ms. Bandzes moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:45 PM; second by Mr. Lahm. Vote was unanimous in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Eliza LoPresti