

**TOWN OF GRANBY
AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN COMMITTEE
January 6, 2022
MINUTES**

PRESENT: Chris Chinni, Monica Logan, Rose Mouning, Mark Neumann, Patricia Sansone and Anna Sogliuzzo; Abigail Kenyon, Director of Community Development; and Sandra Yost, Director of Human Services

C. Chinni called the meeting to order at 5:01 PM.

Approval of Minutes

The date of the January meeting was incorrect in the minutes. The year should be changed to 2022.

On a MOTION by M. Logan, seconded by A. Sogliuzzo, the committee voted (6-0-0) to approve the December 9, 2021 special meeting minutes with the date change.

Presentation and Discussion with Developer About Affordable Housing Developments

Reggie Kronstadt, manager of The Grand Apartments, met with the committee to share information regarding the economic and financial feasibility of developing affordable housing.

Mr. Kronstadt provided background on the development of The Grand Apartments which was the first project his company has done in Hartford County. The original phase of the development, which consists of 130 apartment units, is 100% leased and the second phase to build an additional 75 units consisting of duplexes and single-family homes is currently under construction. Rental housing is in demand by empty-nesters, recent college graduates and young families looking for the ease and convenience of leasing.

He stated the two most important factors developers look at when considering a location are programs offered by a city or town and density of housing units allowed. Programs such as tax abatements are the most common offered by towns and can help make an affordable housing development economically feasible. Opportunities to increase density in exchange for affordable units is also desirable for developers. This allows for more market rate units to offset the revenue on the affordable units. Mr. Kronstadt offered the example of a program in New York City which offers a 30-year tax abatement for a 30% affordable set aside.

Mr. Kronstadt explained that there are more programs available at the State and Federal levels. For example, states offer grants for affordable housing developments, however there is a finite amount of money to be awarded and competition is extremely high. The application process requires extensive time and effort and is often is not successful. Grants are generally awarded to denser areas where there is a greater need for affordable housing. The Federal government also offers incentives such as Low-Income Tax Credits.

In response to a question from the committee, Mr. Kronstadt reviewed the initial steps and phases of an affordable housing project. The developer begins with a market study in the area and reviews local zoning regulations. What is feasible and buildable on the site is determined from this information. Attorneys and engineers are consulted, and a financial analysis is also completed.

When asked if lack of transit is a deterrent to build housing in a town like Granby, Mr. Kronstadt indicated it is not. Public transportation is expected in urban areas, but not in more rural towns. He explained that walkability is a critical factor when planning affordable housing.

A. Kenyon asked R. Kronstadt to provide more information about how changes to zoning regulations can facilitate the development of affordable housing. R. Kronstadt explained developers are interested in what is allowed as of right under the regulations. This streamlines the process and reduces the need for costly permits and long approval processes. It also reduces the risk involved compared to pursuing a project that requires Special Permit approval, where the outcome is unknown and the application can ultimately be denied.

R. Kronstadt concluded his remarks by reiterating that Granby is a vibrant, desirable town and that he would be willing to consult with the Affordable Housing Plan Committee again if more information is needed. Chairman Chinni thanked him for the valuable information and taking the time to meet with the group.

Discuss Next Steps

Next steps for the committee will include:

- Examine sites, including the Kearns School, to determine approximately how many units of affordable housing could be developed.
- Begin work on the details of the plan and assign tasks to committee members.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for Thursday, January 13, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.

Adjournment

On a MOTION by A. Sogliuzzo, seconded by M. Neumann, the committee voted (6-0-0) to adjourn the meeting at 6:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Mazzotta
Recording Secretary