

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 19, 2021; 7:30 P.M.
HELD VIRTUALLY VIA INTERNET AND PHONE

PAGE 21-14

Present: Ken Edgar, Chairman; Jane Connolly, Vice Chairwoman; Don Saltzman, Harry Falber, Sally Korsh, Britta Lerner, Richard Wolf

Also Present: members of the public

Digitally Recorded [held virtually due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency]

7:36 p.m. Chairman Edgar called the meeting to order.

Town of Weston Affordable Housing Plan Public Workshop with SLR Corporation

Chairman Edgar welcomed members of the community and introduced Mike Zuba, Elizabeth Esposito and Pat Gallagher of SLR Corporation. SLR presented a PowerPoint on the Town of Weston Affordable Housing Plan Public Workshop. [The presentation is posted on the Town website.]

1) Introduction and Background

Mr. Zuba stated that, with community engagement, Weston will have the opportunity to create an Affordable Housing Plan that reflects the Town's values and priorities, while conforming to State statutes. The State's guidance on the components of a plan and CT General Statute Section 8-30g, Affordable Housing was discussed. He spoke about the 2020 Town Plan of Conservation and Development and one of its recommendations that the Town strive to improve housing options for all life stages and lifestyles while protecting existing character and natural environments.

2) Community Survey Results - Ms. Esposito presented survey results. [The results are posted on the Town website.]

3) Case Studies and Potential Strategies

To further engage the public, Ms. Esposito introduced Interactive Polling as she presented potential strategies to address affordable housing options. Ms. Esposito, Mr. Zuba and Mr. Gallagher discussed accessory dwelling units, a Village Center and Open-Space Subdivisions, and provided SLR's case studies of other Connecticut towns that have implemented these strategies. SLR asked that the public express their views on these potential strategies by participating in a live poll.

The next steps in the development of an Affordable Housing Plan were discussed. Chairman Edgar stated that the Commission will schedule another public engagement to be held in May before the Plan is finalized by June 30th.

The Commission asked questions and a discussion ensued.

The following members of the public spoke:

Philip Schaefer – asked about waste management systems associated with cluster housing.

Ruth Glazer – expressed concern about the possible varying levels of discretion and oversight with each potential strategy.

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 19, 2021; 7:30 P.M.
HELD VIRTUALLY VIA INTERNET AND PHONE

PAGE 21-15

CONT'D

Steve Ezzes, Board of Finance Chairman – expressed concern that SLR’s analysis of these potential strategies may have not included any potential economic impact to the Town.

Ellen Strauss – asked SLR if its work took into account the Town’s existing attached accessory dwellings and whether any of those could be deemed affordable housing.

Kristana Esslinger, Survey Research Committee – voiced concern about the public’s level of participation during this meeting affecting the results of the interactive polling.

Chairman Edgar stated that the Commission will have a special meeting on April 26th at 10:00 a.m. and SLR will present its assessment of this public workshop and continue to discuss this process. Chairman Edgar spoke about the Tri-Board meeting with local state representatives held earlier that evening to discuss the current legislative session. He stated that the meeting included a discussion on legislative proposals that could impact state zoning laws.

Public comment continued:

Martin Mohabeer – asked for details on accessory dwelling units and possible waste management options for affordable housing.

Jessie Schwartz – asked how fluctuations in income could potentially impact a household’s qualifications for affordable housing. She also asked if the community survey was conducted targeting specific groups.

Margaret Wirtenberg – spoke about the Town’s history regulating accessory dwelling units.

Amy Sanborn – spoke about her concerns in the questions polled and a potential digital divide that may exist within the community and expressed concern about SLR’s commentary on poll results. She thanked the Commission and SLR for their extensive work in this process.

Ron Wall – thanked the Town for the effort put forth. He asked about potential state and/or federal funding that may be available to help offset any fiscal impacts to the Town and asked about a Village District concept. Mr. Wall expressed his concern about the community’s level of participation.

Hearing no further discussion, Britta Lerner made a motion that the Commission adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Vice Chairwoman Connolly. All in favor, the motion carried (6-0). Sally Korsh not voting.

10:03 p.m. Meeting adjourned

Submitted by: AnnMarie Fontana, Assistant