

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

In accordance with the decision taken by the Board of Selectmen on August 12, 2021 to establish a Housing Opportunities Committee, the Board of Selectmen hereby establishes such Committee.

- According to state data, New Fairfield's stock of affordable housing stands at 1.56 percent of its 5,600 housing units, well below the level of 10 percent required in Connecticut Statute Section 8-30g.
- Of those who work in New Fairfield, only 5 percent live here, largely because of the high cost of housing.
- Inability to provide the state required level could subject New Fairfield to state mandated changes to planning and zoning requirements and pre-emption of local laws.

The 2014 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) recognizes the need for action. It states the following:

- "With changing household composition (fewer families and more single-person households) comes an increasing demand for different housing types, including smaller units. The Town should re-examine its zoning regulations to find ways to encourage the development of starter homes, attached units, and other housing types to meet the diverse housing needs of the population."
- "The Town should ensure that both "affordable" and moderate-priced market rate housing are part of its multi-pronged approach to enhancing housing affordability."
- "The Town should pursue a variety of funding sources at both the state and federal levels to develop affordable housing or leverage additional public, non-profit and private sector funds to complete the financing of affordable housing developments."

The New Fairfield Commission on Aging has noted the impact of lack of affordable and rental housing opportunities on New Fairfield Senior Citizens and has requested the Board of Selectmen to take action to comply with state law and meet the needs of its citizens.

The Committee shall:

- Review the health of the current housing stock in New Fairfield in relation to the needs of New Fairfield residents and draft a plan that explores how to create housing stock that reflects affordability and other needs of its residents.
- Initiate and execute a process to engage the community to be proactive on housing opportunities, including, but not limited to
 - Holding public forums concerning housing in New Fairfield to communicate and solicit information and suggestions on affordable housing opportunities,
 - Making available information on the need for such housing and possible approaches.
- Produce an annual report, starting one year from establishment of the Committee, addressed to the Planning Commission, the Zoning Commission, and the Board of Selectmen. The report will provide recommendations for concrete steps the Town can

take to encourage the development of a broader range of housing opportunities that fit the needs of residents. The Committee may also make interim recommendations as required. The recommendations shall address recommended changes to town ordinances and steps that can be taken working with faith organizations, housing trusts, local developers, lending institutions, and others to increase the availability of affordable housing.

The Committee shall be made up of 5-7 members appointed by the Board of Selectmen, reflecting the diversity of interests and political affiliations of New Fairfield residents and shall have a term of three years starting from its first meeting.

In order to facilitate communication on housing among town entities, the Board of Selectmen shall also appoint three ex officio members to serve on the Committee from each of the Planning Commission, the Zoning Commission, and the Board of Selectmen, taking into account the recommendation of those entities.

The Board of Selectmen will make appointments to fill vacancies as they occur during the term of the Committee and may extend the term of the Committee as required to continue progress on affordable housing opportunities. The Committee Shall elect its chairman.