

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
Town of Canaan
Special Meeting Minutes
Housing Informational Session
Hosted by the Planning & Zoning Commission in collaboration with the Falls
Village Housing Trust (FVHT) and Northwest Connecticut Habitat for
Humanity
Location: Falls Village Volunteer Fire Department
188 Route 7 South, Falls Village, CT 06031
Date: November 5, 2025

Attendance

- **Present:** ZEO Janell Mullen; Chairman Greg Marlowe; Vice Chair Stephen Koshland
Members: Eileen Kinsella, Kimberly Mahoney, Vincent Inconiglios, Matthew Macchi,
Doug Cohn, Tim Metzger
Alternate Member: Kathy Clark
- **Absent:** Alternate Marc Rosen
- **Also Present:**
 - Representing Bodwell Engineering, Keith Bodwell (engineer)
 - Representing FVHT: Jandi Hanna (president), Jocelyn Ayer (director LCCHO), and Dave Mallison
 - Representing NWCT Habitat for Humanity: Bob Whalen (president)
 - Representing NWCT Land Conservancy: Amanda Branson (director of operations)
- **Public Attendance:** Approximately 30 residents
- **Seating of Alternates:** None

1. Call to Order

Chairman Greg Marlowe (also acting as Moderator) called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Overview

Chairman Marlowe explained the meeting format and read aloud the list of questions compiled by the Planning & Zoning Commission (*see attached*).

3. P&Z Questions for FVHT and NWCT Habitat for Humanity

Summary of Questions and Responses

1. Current Projects

- **FVHT:** Renovating five existing units (Minor/Prospect Street) and planning 16 new rental units at the River Road Homes Project.
- **Habitat:** Planning up to five duplex units for homeownership on two acres of River Road land; 68 acres will be transferred to the Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy.

2. Timeline and Groundbreaking

- **FVHT:** All zoning approvals are in place. Infrastructure groundbreaking is planned for Spring 2026, with project completion targeted for 2027.
- **Habitat:** Anticipates a phased build-out over 10 years, with initial groundbreaking in late 2026 or early 2027, pending approvals.

3. Site Plan Modifications

- **FVHT:** Plans to request a reduction in site lighting and has agreed to an easement for Habitat/Land Conservancy access.
- **Habitat:** Design remains in development; they are working toward a plan for five duplex units, as encouraged by the Commission.

4. Biggest Obstacles

- **FVHT:** Challenges include navigating multi-stage funding processes and securing contractors and civil engineers.
- **Habitat:** Key obstacles are obtaining approvals from Torrington Area Health District and P&Z and managing internal cash flow to support phased construction.

5. Project Cost and Funding

- **Estimated Unit Cost:** \$400,000–\$500,000 per unit (total development cost).
- **FVHT Funding:** Includes state DOH pre-development loans and a federal HUD infrastructure grant. Main DOH financing is expected.
- **Habitat Funding:** Primarily internally funded, with anticipated revenue from land transactions to support the project.

6. Maintenance and Oversight

- **FVHT:** Will hire a professional property manager; maintenance funded through tenant rents.
- **Habitat:** Will maintain the property (potentially via HOA) and committed to plowing the common access road to the recreational area.

7. Incentive Housing Zone (IHZ) Administration

- **FVHT:** Will recommend the state Department of Housing (DOH) to the Board of Selectmen to verify IHZ affordability compliance.
- **Habitat:** May designate an external firm (e.g., Housing Enterprises Inc.) to ensure compliance with IHZ affordability ratios.

4. P&Z Follow-Up Questions

Topics included infrastructure funding reliability, contingency planning, and construction impact.

Responses from FVHT and Habitat (highlights)

- **Funding Reliability:** DOH funding is considered dependable due to the state's commitment to addressing the housing crisis.
- **Infrastructure Gap:** Federal infrastructure funding is limited. FVHT will bid out construction and pursue DOH funding immediately after infrastructure completion. While there is a risk of delay, they are confident the gap will be brief.
- **Construction Impact:** The 24-month timeline is ambitious, but the project is geographically contained, minimizing disruption compared to scattered development. Both organizations committed to being sensitive to community concerns during construction.

5. Public Comment and Questions

Residents raised concerns about:

- Stormwater management and potential flooding
- Impacts on private wells and septic systems
- Water supply source and oversight
- Construction-related disruptions
- Funding availability and project completion

Responses from FVHT and Habitat:

- Existing wells and septic systems will remain unaffected.
- Residents were assured that the project team is aware of potential construction-related impacts and is actively working to minimize them.
- A larger culvert will be installed to manage stormwater.

- Funding is in place to support full project completion.
- Water service will follow the same independent model used by the HVRHS, with the same company responsible for testing and safety.

State and HUD Approvals

- The water company's role was reviewed as part of the environmental report required for HUD funding.
- HUD released funds for use in early June, allowing disbursement requests to begin.
- The State of Connecticut has inspected the property, reviewed well sites, and issued written approvals for all work completed to date, including planned well drilling.
- Additional approvals will be required once wells are installed and water testing is complete.

Torrington Area Health District

- Actively involved in reviewing septic and well systems.
- Preliminary soil testing has been completed; further coordination is underway to determine optimal configurations.
- Approvals must be secured before the project proceeds to Planning and Zoning for final review.

Public Water Supply Determination

- Whether the system qualifies as a public water supply depends on the final unit count, bedroom configuration, and projected daily water usage.
- Oversight may fall under either the State or Torrington Area Health, depending on those thresholds.

Additional Comments:

- One resident requested that no construction occur on Saturdays. This request was acknowledged and noted by the Commission.
- Another resident questioned whether the approved 16 units exceed the state's maximum of 14. Jocelyn Ayer will investigate this further.

6. Adjournment

Chairman Marlowe called for adjournment at 6:30 PM. Vice Chair Koshland made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Eileen Kinsella.

Attachment(s):

- Planning & Zoning Commission Questions for Consideration

Respectfully Submitted, Patti Fife (Secretary)

TOWN OF CANAAN (FALLS VILLAGE) Planning & Zoning Commission

hosts

**The Falls Village Housing Trust and The Northwest Connecticut Habitat for Humanity
Housing Informational Session**

Wednesday, November 5th, 2025 at 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

Falls Village Volunteer Fire Department – 188 Route 7 S (In person)

Questions for Consideration

1. Both organizations, Falls Village Housing Trust (FVHT) and Habitat for Humanity Northwest CT (HFHNWCT), please describe the current projects you have slated for the Town of Canaan (Falls Village). Feel free to describe projects aside from the River Road location.
2. What is the proposed timeline or target timeline for completion of the project? When do you anticipate submitting for zoning permit approvals? When do you endeavor to be breaking ground? Do you plan to complete the construction in phases or as quickly as possible?
3. Are there any elements in the proposed site plan that are being considered for modification?
(ie lot line modification, number of units, lighting, driveway configuration, parking, landscaping, etc?)
4. Currently, what are the biggest obstacles to getting your project to the next step in the process? What do you see as the biggest impediment to your project's overall completion.
5. What is the total project cost? How much of the funding have you secured? What are your expected future sources of funding?
6. Upon completion, how will the project be maintained? How will maintenance be funded?
7. Per our regulations, "an Administering Agency" is required for these projects. The P&Z does not intend to fulfill this role locally, who do you have in mind to serve as the "Administering Agency"?