

Town of North Canaan  
Housing Plan Steering Committee  
October 19, 2021, 5:30pm via zoom

Present: Jocelyn Ayer, First Selectman Charlie Perotti, Mike Pallone, Will Perotti, Ashleigh Bergenty, Marybeth Warbeck, Dalton Jacquier

Ms. Ayer began the meeting at 5:35 with introductions of the participants and herself.

The basis for the first meeting is to get a general sense of the reason behind doing the plan and the process, etc.

The reason that the town is creating a plan is because in 2017 legislature passed a law requiring every town to have a 5 year affordable housing plan to be completed by June of 2022. This plan will need to be updated every 5 years.

The role of this group will be to aid in the process of data collection around town, perhaps doing a resident survey, giving information and feedback to eventually create the plan.

The first steps in the plan will be to figure out what the housing needs are for North Canaan.

Jocelyn worked with Salisbury on their plan and presented slides to the group to give some information regarding the creation of a plan. She will send the slides to the members.

The plan always starts with the Plan of Conservation and Development which the town does have.

Process:

- What North Canaan's housing needs are
- housing needs survey for residents and workers (2 different surveys) survey monkey
- Can do mapping with grant funding if need to
- Draft goals and strategies
- Engage residents – community forum - look for public feedback
- Draft the housing plan – go out and get feedback on it
- Adoption process. Has to be adopted by the town. Take a draft to planning and zoning which is consistent with plan of conservation then to town of selectman to approve.

Jocelyn would like to meet monthly for about an hour which should finish the plan in about 9-12 months. She is looking for this committee to give feedback during each of the steps in the process and make sure that we stay on track and get community input.

More information can be found at [northwesthillscog.org/housing](http://northwesthillscog.org/housing)

Jocelyn will send the link for the video that Ted Perotti created on what affordable housing looks like in small towns.

The state defines affordable housing as: only costs 30% of the income of a household or 80% of the median income (Litchfield County) and someone is monitoring this. The state encourages towns to have 10% or more of their housing be affordable. North Canaan is just above 10%.

Due to home sale prices rising it is making it less affordable than it used to be to own a home and to go from renting to owning. A lot of younger individuals continue to live with their parents.

Next steps:

Housing needs data analysis

There was a discussion regarding a housing needs survey and getting it out to residents. Jocelyn will send a list of questions of what have been used in other towns on surveys. It can go on the website, places in town (i.e. Wangum Village), text messages could be sent out. Paper versions can be available to the older residents. Social media and local businesses may be a good way to get the word out.

The next meeting date will be Tuesday November 9<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm via zoom. We will hold meetings the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month unless something comes up.

Questions raised:

How does Canaan stand in comparison to affordability? Canaan already has many opportunities so they are doing well. Once the committee is able to get into what residents think, opinions what's good and the challenges etc, based on that feedback we will be able to determine better. We want to have housing that meets all stages of a person's life with a spectrum of options.

Does the state hold towns accountable for this? The new law does not have a specific accountability but they could at some point decide to withhold discretionary funding from a town that is not compliant.

The reason the state keeps track is because of State Statute 830G which states if a town does not have 10% or more of stock which is affordable then any developer can override the zoning regulations as long as they have met basic health and safety standards. Canaan is over 10%.

Is there an incentive for 10% or higher? The state invests a lot of money in construction for affordable housing so it could make the town more competitive for state funding for construction.

Even though this plan is called affordable housing plan we need to look at the whole spectrum including market rate and have it all be part of the plan. It should be a more robust plan and make sure that all housing needs are met and not just affordable. We need to get as many resident voices heard as possible.

Respectfully submitted,

Ayrslea A Odell  
Recording Secretary