

Town of North Canaan
Housing Steering Committee
Regular Meeting
March 2, 2022, via zoom

Present: Jocelyn Ayer, Selectman Charlie Perotti, Ashleigh Minor, Marybeth Warbeck, Dalton Jacquier, Will Perotti

Jocelyn started the meeting at 5:30pm. The discussion tonight will focus on goals and strategies

Regarding the recent town forum – Selectman Perotti stated that he felt it went well. Wish there had been more people and maybe now the information will begin to get out further into the community.

There was a discussion regarding when Station Place was constructed, the HUD money, 3-5 acres of land was needed and connections to town water and sewer available.

Selectman Perotti met with the superintendent of Station Place and their availability is non-existent with the exception of a 3-bedroom unit which will be ready in June. They have a large wait list. They are trying to clean up because of bad reports on the site and an upcoming inspection.

Jocelyn shared with the committee the survey results summary. The focus is to put some (or all) of these into possible goals and strategies for a very beginning first draft. She would like to consider this a brainstorming session and recommends not taking anything off the list unless the group is 100% sure. Currently this list is in no priority order.

Rental options for young adults seemed to be of interest to everyone at the forum. The topic came up from many different perspectives. Station place discussion ensued and included reference to needing funding to replace windows. A question regarding the road into Station Place and if it were owned by the town or not as it is in need of repair. The road is NOT a town road. It is owned by Teeter Riva. The first 200 feet (or so) is shared with businesses on main street and does receive a lot of traffic.

There was a discussion regarding evictions – HUD did have a moratorium on evictions preventing landlords from doing normal evictions. In general evictions are very difficult except for non-payment of rent and they are costly.

A question arose as to whether the Canfield had any commercial space which could be turned into residential space. The 3rd floor is operated by George Johannessen for his engineering business.

Zoning regulations need to be looked at in regard to conversions of a large house into potential rental units. The State of CT passed legislation recently asking towns to make assessor apartments by right as opposed to special permit. Towns could opt out. We should ask the Zoning Enforcement Officer what is going on with North Canaan and this legislation. There is state funding for projects where properties are used for units but would have restrictions some of which are 30-year restrictions, and most people don't want to have lengthy restrictions on their property. A suggestion was made for a multi-town funding project as long as town water and sewer were available.

Suggestion was made to produce a check list for homeowners for what is needed to create an assessor apartment. The list could be easier to interpret instead of trying to figure out the zoning regulations. A similar checklist could be created for HUD projects as well. Most of these are not profitable only break even. Beckley house get some reimbursement due to the type of funding.

There was a discussion regarding the possibility of partnering with employers in town to keep an apartment on retainer for the employer to have when needed for employees.

Senior housing discussion included Wangum Village being in the 100-year flood plain so unsure of the proximity to the river. At one time there was talk of converting the old Geer nursing home into apartments. Jocelyn will ask Kevin about that.

CDBG funding discussion ensued. Ashleigh stated that there was not enough time to apply for this year's funding, hopefully next year. The North Canaan Housing Authority is in need of 1 person to fill a spot on their board.

Zoning regulations need to be discussed. Perhaps townhouse style unit's vs assessor apartments. Tax incentives for ADA housing discussed. Focusing on the zoning regulations and ways to keep seniors in their houses. There are small city funds available and discussion of grant funding.

Marybeth talked about designated resources for residents in danger. Melissa, the new social worker, is taking classes and getting trained to deal with situations and is working with the resident trooper.

Discussion of how to implement plan, make people more aware of this, but we have a good idea of what people want and now just need to put it together.

Selectman Perotti will look at the zoning regulations. Will Perotti requested the survey results be sent to him to show to the EDC.

Next meeting will be April 6.

Meeting ended 6:40pm

Respectfully submitted,

Ayrslea A Odell