

Town of North Canaan  
Housing Steering Committee  
May 4, 2022  
Via Zoom

Present: Jocelyn Ayer, First Selectman Charlie Perotti, Ashleigh Bergenty, Marybeth Wabrek, Mike Pallone

Ms. Ayer opened the meeting at 5:36pm

Members of the committee requested that the time of these meetings be later, so the next meeting will be June 1 at 7:00pm

Ms. Ayer apologized for not getting the draft out to the members. She will try to get it out before the next meeting.

Ms. Ayer had a conversation with the ZEO George Martin about reviewing the zoning regulations and trying to figure out how to clarify things around residential uses which may be helpful. She will be attending the July Planning and Zoning meeting.

What are the next steps and timeline? A forum to get more feedback and to see who may want to volunteer to be on sub committees would be beneficial.

The housing plan so far was shown to the members. Ms. Ayer would like to add photos to the presentation – perhaps a group photo of the steering committee as well as of housing and/or people in Canaan. Please send an email with pictures to her.

The draft zoning analysis was reviewed with the committee. There was an extensive discussion regarding accessory apartments. Ms. Ayer would suggest allowing accessory apartments in the residential areas without a special permit (would still be subject to zoning regulations). Ms. Wabrek is concerned that neighbors should be appraised before hand as there will be more traffic, more cars, etc. There was a question of allowing accessory apartments in the commercial zones – specifically in the area from GHI sign south on Route 7. The zoning regulations are very unclear about permitting for 2 family and/or multifamily housing. Mr. Pallone explained that for 3+ family housing the fire codes, restrictions etc. are more complex than a 2-family house. Ms. Ayer explained that some towns are allowing up to 2 accessory apartments rather than just 1 as well as doing away with the owner occupancy requirements. Owner occupancy is very difficult to enforce. The committee thinks we should suggest removing that restriction and ask for clarifications regarding multifamily dwellings and where they are/are not allowed. Some may be grandfathered in.

There was a discussion regarding a specific property and allowing smaller lots if they are hooked into town water and sewer.

The committee thinks doing another survey may get feedback from people and show us who might be interested in being on a housing committee or land trust. A meeting between planning and zoning chair and zeo, the EDC chair, the selectman and Ms. Ayer would be beneficial. Selectman Perotti said they

will look at schedules and come up with a date/time. We could invite other people too to hear what is going on. Ms. Ayer will draft some survey questions.

Ms. Bergenty brought up a discussion regarding the Blackberry Commons housing. It was originally for senior living. They are duplex houses. There is a lot of property there, but it is unclear what if anything they are doing with it. Selectman Perotti will find out who owns it and have a letter sent to them to find out where they stand. There was further discussion regarding property near Wangum Village and on Barlow Street near the old Bicron buildings.

The meeting was ended at 6:43pm

Respectfully submitted

Ayrslea A Odell

Recording Secretary