

TOWN OF WESTPORT
AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE
MINUTES
August 12, 2025

The August 12, 2025, meeting of the Affordable Housing Committee (“AHC”) was called to order at 3:00 p.m. in room 309 of the Westport Town Hall.

ATTENDING: Jim Foster, Gail Kelly, Kate Weber, Ralph Yearwood

STAFF: Michelle Perillie, Director, Planning & Zoning

1) Upon motion by Kate Weber, seconded by Ralph Yearwood, the June 10, 2025 Minutes of the AHC were approved.

2) Jim Foster reported that there is roughly \$1.3 million in the Trust Fund and there are currently no changes to be made to the information provided in the Affordable Housing Dashboard and Inventory Decks. Kate questioned whether the monies in the Fund are being invested in any securities. Jim will follow up with Gary Conrad, Finance Director.

3) AHC Website. The Committee discussed a draft of a mission statement to be published on the AHC website page. The current draft includes information on the establishment and purpose of the Fund, and the establishment of the AHC. The statement also includes the powers and duties of the AHC. The Committee approved the proposed mission statement.

There followed a discussion with the public concerning the mission statement and concerning the purpose of the AHC. Specifically, which town official or committee is, or should be, responsible for ensuring that the recommendations in the Affordable Housing Plan and POCD to provide affordable housing are implemented. Is the AHC facilitating or making it happen? Discussion included educating the residents on affordable housing and expanding the Committee’s mission statement. The AHC will also review the mission statement of the P&Z Affordable Housing Committee

4) FAQs. Jonathan Steinberg reported that there will be a special session of the state legislature in October. During that session changes to HB 5002 with respect to affordable housing will be proposed and likely adopted. This should inform our discussion and ultimately what is included in the FAQs.

There followed a discussion among Committee members and members of the public regarding what questions should be included on its webpage. Among the suggestions were:

- (a) What is affordable housing? It was agreed that the FAQs should start with the basic question of what is affordable housing as opposed to first introducing the question, “what is 8-30g?”.
- (b) Who lives in affordable housing? E.g. occupation of occupants

- (c) What is Westport's current affordable housing inventory? What is the expectation?
- (d) Provide some history
- (e) Why does Westport want affordable housing? What percentage of current Westport residents struggle with housing costs?
- (f) Include information provided by the Center for Housing Opportunity which includes Westport's AMI Breakdown and Westport Salaries Relative to AMI for a Single Adult.
- (g) What is the role of P&Z; Housing Authority; HwH?
- (h) Highlight that affordable housing is a town priority and explain how the town is dealing with it.
- (i) Explain 8-30g and area vs. state median income
- (j) Explain the purpose of the Trust Fund.

4) Application process. The AHC discussed a process for applying for funds from the Trust Fund. The Committee will review forms from other municipalities. It was agreed that the Committee needs to set criteria for an award of funds and a schedule of awards to ensure fairness.

5) Future meeting topics. Waiting lists; occupations of residents in affordable housing; how to dispel rumors associated with affordable housing.

5) Old Business

a) Baron's South. Michelle reported that text amendment # 849 was adopted as modified. Allows housing on all buildings on Baron's south, with the exception of Golden Shadows. The text amendment will allow for affordable residential use of existing buildings. Any development will require an 8-24 and special permit. Currently no time frame for renovating current buildings.

b) Hamlet – denied by vote of 4 Commissioners. An appeal has been filed. As of the date of this meeting, no 8-30g application has been submitted to P&Z.

d) 50 PRW – Michelle reported that to date only a pre-app has been submitted.

e) Humaine Society property – the plan is to build residential (20% affordable) and some commercial.

c) Interaction with other committees. The AHC agreed on the need to have dialogue with other town committees which are interested in affordable housing. E.g. RTM health and human services committee and P&Z affordable housing subcommittee.

For future meetings, agreed to post any agenda documentation on the AHC webpage.

There was no other business to discuss.

Upon motion made by Ralph Yearwood and seconded by Kate Weber, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted
Gail Kelly