

Waterbury Housing Task Force Special Meeting Tuesday, September 3rd, 2024

6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Via ZOOM

MINUTES:

Attendees: Owen Sette-Ducati, Alyssa Johnson, Chris Balzano, Kati Gallagher & Eliza Novick-Smith.

Called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm

Review Agenda and no additions made.

Reviewed the proposed lot layout.

Directive/Questions from Select Board:

Plot of land owned by the town on Armory Ave between High Street and Hillcrest Terrace. The town is considering dividing the land into 8 lots to be used for housing as depicted in the plan, providing sewer to those lots not yet served, and selling the lots to a developer (or developers) for housing.

- Town of Waterbury would pay to extend the existing sewer system so that all lots are served by water and sewer.
- There's a town-owned equipment building behind lots 5 - 7 that needs to be demolished, and a new building built at a different location.
- The town would like the sale of the lots to offset all these costs (and any other costs associated with preparing the lots for housing).

Should Select Board describe a process for how the land is developed and sold--how will we get neighbor and community input?

This plot represents a lot of opportunity to build outside the flood plain, walkable to downtown, adjacent to school. Opportunity for town to figure out creative ways to develop and to get the most out of this investment for the town.

Maximize sewer, need for single family homes possibly less than need for more units.

State and town priorities point in direction of building densely.

How to prioritize reserving lots, or marking lots for folks displaced from downtown.

Encouraging Habitat for Humanity build.

Interest in looking at a planned-unit development?

QUESTIONS about how to enforce any possible restrictions, and how to design workforce housing.

Start a robust neighbor outreach plan as soon as possible.

We have identified a need for “starter homes” (3+ bedrooms) for younger families; senior housing, and HUD affordable rentals. Can we take a step towards all of those needs in this one project, or pick one?

Getting HUD compliant housing with 51 S. Main--“workforce housing” with area median-income peg might make sense for this project, particularly given its proximity to the elementary school.

Focus on density, accessibility, and affordability, as defined by area median income.

Connect to the Zoning updates. This development could be a model for developing in line with new Zoning rules for the downtown: denser development that can be meshed into the existing neighborhood.

Recommendation 1: This would be development led by the town, on behalf of current and future residents in a direct way. In that spirit, we encourage the Select Board to design and implement a community engagement process to ensure that development of this lot reflects community input and needs, and detail the plan and process for selling and finding developers for the land.

Recommendation 2: The HTF supports higher density on this site, in order to reflect the town's housing goals as identified in the Municipal Plan and the new zoning bylaws.

Recommendation 3: The HTF has identified several different categories of additional housing that are needed: Affordable rentals (per HUD guidelines), “Starter Homes” of at least 3 bedrooms for younger families (two earners making area median income), and accessible housing for seniors. As this project develops, the HTF will be better able to make recommendations about which of these needs will be best served by developing the site. Without more information, given its proximity to the elementary school, this site may be ideal for developing workforce family housing.

Adjourn at 7:10 pm