

**TOWN OF HADDAM
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING
TOWN HALL
21 FIELD PARK DRIVE, HADDAM, CT 06438
THURSDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2021
UNAPPROVED MINUTES
*Subject to Approval by the Commission***

ATTENDANCE

X	Gina Block
X	Steven Bull, Vice Chairman
X	Michael Farina
A	Jamin Laurenza, Secretary
X	Wayne LePard
A	Dan Luisi
X	Edward Wallor, Chairman
X	Robert Braren, Alternate - Seated
A	Alan Chadwick, Alternate
A	Larry Maggi, Alternate
X	Bill Warner, AICP Town Planner
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order

Mr. Wallor, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge was recited.

3. Attendance/Seating of the Alternates

Attendance was taken and all regular members as well as Mr. Braren, alternate member, were seated.

4. Additions/Corrections to the Agenda

The agenda stood as submitted.

5. Public Comments

There was no public present.

6. Public Hearing/Public Meeting

There was no public hearing scheduled.

7. New Business

a. Discussion about Affordable Housing and the Creation of the Affordable Housing Plan

Using a PowerPoint presentation (Exhibit A – 8 pages - copy on file with the minutes in the Town Clerk's Office and the Land Use Office), Mr. Warner reviewed the following with the Commission:

2015 Incentive Housing Zone (IHZ) Study conducted by the Commission – various parcels looked at for multi-family development; created an Housing Opportunity District (HOD) regulation and seven years later the zone has not been utilized.

2017 Connecticut General Statute 8-30j is adopted. 8-30j (a) – “Once every five years, each municipality shall prepare or amend and adopt an affordable housing plan. Such plan shall specify how the municipality intends to increase the number of affordable housing developments in the municipality.” Mr. Warner stated the last sentence is the only criteria. It does not specify what is required or who adopts it and no public hearing required. State recognized it was an unfunded mandate and used federal funds to create a grant program. Mr. Warner reported he did apply for a grant and the town has received \$15,000 to draft an affordable housing plan.

Section 8 - Mr. Warner stated that a number of people do not understand what affordable housing is and that it is not Section 8 housing. Mr. Warner gave an overview of it. **Section 8** is a federal program and there are two sub-programs: **1) Vouchers** – Very low income people who cannot afford their rent who receive a voucher from the housing authority. The voucher pays the balance of what the individual cannot pay. Mr. Warner also stated once an individual has a voucher, they can go live anywhere; therefore, there may be Section 8 housing in Haddam. **2) Project Based** – Supported by the municipality and managed by the housing authority. Mr. Warner stated this type of housing will not be seen in Haddam. Mr. Warner also stated federal or state housing projects, managed by a housing authority, are no longer being built; they want the private sector to do so.

Mr. Bull asked about the Carabetta apartments in Middletown. Mr. Warner stated Carabetta is private housing – 30 year tax abatements taken (soon to expire) and had to agree to keep the rents low.

Continuing with this presentation, Mr. Warner stated privately developed affordable housing complexes include: Essex, Old Saybrook, Farmington, Avon, and Madison using grants from the Dept. of Housing, CHFA, HUD, low income tax credits, and Connecticut General Statute (CGS) 8-30g high density (Essex).

CGS8-30g – Mr. Warner stated this statute was created in 1989 and it says if a developer proposes 30 percent of affordable housing in their project they can essentially ignore the Commission's regulations; and if the Commission wants to deny the project, they would have to do so citing public health or safety issues. The statute says if a town does not have 10 percent of its housing as affordable, then it's subject to 8-30g. Mr. Warner reviewed Haddam's figures - to reach the 10 percent goal Haddam would need 351 units and currently only have 50 units (1.4 percent). Mr. Warner stated he doesn't believe this will be a problem for Haddam.

Deed Restricted Accessory Apartments - Mr. Wallor spoke in regard to the 2015 Malone and MacBroom study and about deed restrictions on in-law apartments in order to get Haddam closer to the 10 percent requirement. Mr. Wallor stated that he was under the impression that if the town was at least showing an effort to reach the 10 percent goal, there would not be an issue regarding 8-30g. Mr. Wallor asked Mr. Warner if the Commission had the authority to require a deed restriction on new accessory apartments; noting that he has always asked why the Commission could not do so in an attempt to get closer to the 10 percent, but that he had never received an answer one way or another. Mr. Warner stated the Commission would make the argument for a developer to use the HOD Zone; and yes, the Commission can say accessory apartments have to be deed restricted (Killingworth does it). Mr. Warner stated a boiler plate restriction can be developed. Mr. Wallor thought it would be good to show the State of Connecticut that at least Haddam is trying.

Affordable Housing – Mr. Warner stated it's housing – rental or homeownership – condos, apartments, or single family homes - that is affordable to individuals and families making 80 percent or less than the area median income. Mr. Warner reviewed Haddam's median income - \$108,800 (family size/income limits – 1/\$56,576, 2/\$65,280, 3/\$72,869, 4/\$81,600, and 6/\$88,128). **Rentals** - Mr. Warner then reviewed affordable rents or mortgage payments in Haddam, noting that most state programs use the

Fair Market Rent for the region which is determined by HUD – Efficiency/\$710, 1-bedroom/\$810, 2-bedroom/\$1,080, 3-bedroom/\$1,340, and 4-bedroom/\$1,570. **Homeownership** - Mr. Warner reviewed the calculations for a family of four and a family of two. A family of four with \$80,000 income with 10 percent down and no more than 30 percent of income (\$24,000) can be dedicated to housing expenses (mortgage, taxes, insurance), this family could afford a monthly payment of \$2,000 on a \$330,000 house. A family of two with \$65,280 income and 10 percent down could afford a monthly payment of \$1,632 on a \$275,000. For more detail see page 5 of Exhibit A. **Housing Stock in Haddam** – Total units – 3,504 units, 3,188 (91 percent) single family homes, 75 percent owner occupied, 43 percent of units built before 1970, and virtually no meaningful rental stock. **Naturally Occurring Affordable Units** – Mr. Warner stated there are a lot of opportunities in the \$200,000 range and reviewed home sales in Haddam from 2019 – 71 percent under \$350,000, 2020 – 58 percent under \$350,000, and 2021 to date – 50 percent under \$350,000 (Exhibit B - all home sales under \$350,000 highlighted in yellow; copy on file with the minutes in the Town Clerk's Office and the Land Use Office); therefore, a family of four would be in the ball park for half of the houses sold in Haddam. Mr. Warner stated in 2020 a revaluation was conducted and 1,976 units were assessed at under \$300,000 (62 percent of all single family homes). In terms of supply, there are only five houses in town currently listed on the MLS and three of them are below \$350,000.

In conclusion, Mr. Warner reported there are a sufficient number of affordable, single family homes in Haddam. The cost of construction and land costs will not allow the construction of new affordable single family homes. The lack of a down payment, credit and student loan debt will be a potential problem for many trying to buy a first time, affordable single family home in Haddam. Mr. Warner told the Commission he did not believe the plan should focus on creating subdivisions of single family homes for affordable housing due to the costs and there being a sufficient supply.

What's Next – Mr. Warner stated at the next meeting, the Commission will talk about: 1) Population not growing (in last ten years the town grew by 54 people and is projected to go down by two percent in the next 10 years). There have been no more than 10 building permits since 2009. 2) Population not projected to grow. 3) Population getting significantly older. Mr. Warner noted the 2015 study was done, Haddam was already older than the county and the state and we're even older now (median age 46). 4) Younger residents have no choice but to live somewhere other than their hometown. It will be difficult for college graduates/entry level employees to find housing and developers say the market studies do not say there's a demand for baby boomers downsizing.

Who do we need to provide for and where and how? Mr. Warner stated he believes the Commission needs to provide for kids getting out of college (Generation Z) and those who are downsizing that may want to stay in town. Mr. Warner stated he had read about a town that had created a grant program that helps people to stay in their houses.

Mr. LePard stated the town has two acre zoning and he had thought it was not to be exclusionary, but that the land supported the home. If there were areas with very good percolation and a water supply, then there could be denser housing there, but that would require rezoning. Mr. Warner stated yes, soil based zoning. Tylerville has good sandy soil, as well as properties along the river, but there is not a lot of great soil in the town. Discussion followed in regard to septic and well separation distances – 75 feet; areas where it can work – Thayer Road, less than one acre lots, well/septic, town does not know of any septic failures or contaminated wells (health code is very stringent); and the viability to create a one acre zone in areas offering very good soil.

Grant Funding - Mr. Warner spoke in regard to the manner in which to spend the \$15,000 grant money. 1) **Community Septic System, Higganum Center** – This will change everything in Higganum. Potential areas for infill behind Hi-Way Package Store, in front of Brookside, back piece of 323 Saybrook Road. 2) **Groundwater Contamination, Higganum Center** – Study conducted in 2000 by Weston and Sampson to install community wells behind HES. Perhaps a water system should be looked at as well.

3) **Other areas that should be looked at.** Mr. LePard suggested the former Arrigoni sand pit next to the power station on Saybrook Road. Mr. Warner spoke about Larry's Garage and the residential piece (8 acres; Mrs. Block voiced concern over potential petroleum cleanup). Property across from the Three Oaks (a lot of ledge; flat on top). Discussion followed in regard to density and residents not wanting to pay for approximately 32 residents/businesses to have a sewer line when a community septic system would be more feasible. Mr. LePard asked about the Village Court Plaza property and its potential viability for development. Mr. Warner stated he had not heard of anything regarding the property. The Kovacik property (Killingworth Road and High Street). Designing just for the village. Mr. Warner stated a WPCA has been created and they could expand the area if they see a need. Mr. Warner also stated the Commission can never be accused of spot zoning if a zone change is for the benefit of the town. Mr. LePard asked where mini housing might fit in. Mr. Warner stated it's a very specialized market (one being built in Haddam Neck). Mr. LePard stated at one point Haddam had a minimum square footage. Mr. Warner stated the town no longer does that.

8. Approval/Correction of the Minutes

Prior to the vote, Mr. LePard stated he was absent from the 2 September 2021 meeting; and asked those Commissioners who were present if the minutes were an accurate reflection. Those Commissioners who were in attendance indicated yes.

MOTION: Ed Wallor motioned to approve the 2 September 2021 minutes as submitted. Steve Bull second. Motion carried unanimously.

9. Chairman's Report

Mr. Wallor thanked Mr. Warner for the presentation he gave and the work put into it.

Distance Requirements Between Package Stores - Mr. Bull stated a business person in Higganum claims that in other towns there are restrictions on distances - 1,500 feet - between like businesses, this one happens to be a liquor store. Mr. Bull stated he did not recall Haddam's regulations having this type of requirement. Mr. Bull also stated this business owners argument is all four currently licensed package stores in Haddam could be lined up side by side. Mr. Warner stated the business owner has spoken to him and that his argument is he not only does not want liquor stores within 1,500 feet of each other, but he also does not want any business to carry any type of liquor license. Mr. Warner stated the owner will be attending the Commission's next meeting. Discussion followed in regard to most towns having a distance requirement, but Haddam does not; the different types of licenses allowing the sale of alcohol; supply and demand; convenience in shopping (beer/wine at a grocery store); and Haddam not being allowed any more than the four package stores that currently exist. Mr. Warner noted there was concern about the tattoo parlor having a monopoly and this concern could create a monopoly for liquor stores and be perceived as anti-competition. Mr. Warner noted the business owner just took over the store and is new to the area.

10. Scheduling of Hearings

968 Killingworth Road – Proposed Feed Store – Thursday, 21 October 2021. The applicant will need to go before Wetlands, Monday, 18 October 2021, and then come before the Commission. This is a farm related business and the owner would like to have trailers for hay and bins for topsoil and manure.

11. Town Planner's Report

Wi-Fi in the Town Hall – Mr. Warner reported Wi-Fi is available in the Town Hall and pointed out the posting of the password.

POCD Implementation Committee (PIC) – Reappointments – Mr. Warner reviewed the list (Exhibit C; copy on file with the minutes in the Town Clerk’s Office and the Land Use Office) of the committee members – Steve Bull (P&Z), Lynne Cooper (POCD), Kate Anderson (EDC), Patrick Pinnell (Buildings), Raul De Brigard (POCD), Ed Wallor (P&Z), Gail Reynolds (Conservation/Wetlands), and Peter Baird (BOF) noting that Mr. Baird replaced Joe Centofanti as the Board of Finance’s representative. Mr. Warner reported the original appointment expiration date is 2021 and not 2020 (typo; was addressed by the Commission at their 7 May 2020 meeting, page 7 of the meeting minutes), and Joe Centofanti has been replaced by Peter Baird to represent the Board of Finance (BOF). Mr. Bull reported the PIC has not met since the start of the pandemic, but will look into scheduling a meeting.

MOTION: Ed Wallor motioned to appoint the PIC members for another three-year (terms to expire 10.01.2024) with the exception of Joe Centofanti and add Peter Baird (BOF). Gina Block second. Motion carried unanimously.

WFS Gravel Pit – Mr. LePard asked Mr. Warner if he was aware the sand pit was being used by the local youth for their dirt bikes and there was an accident in which two went to the hospital. Mr. Warner stated he was not aware and he will get in touch with Doug Anderson, owner. Mr. LePard stated if the site had been regraded and replanted, he doesn’t believe it would be used as a sand pit for the dirt bikes. Mr. LePard also stated he doesn’t see the accident as a direct responsibility of the Commission; however, P&Z allowed the sand pit to run for years. Mr. Wallor disagreed; stating the State of Connecticut (Stipulated Judgement) stated the Commission had to allow the business to operate. Mr. LePard stated the Commission agreed on a closure date. Mr. Wallor stated the State placed a closure date (12.31.2019). Mr. Warner and Mr. Wallor stated the site did close down. Mr. Warner stated Mr. Anderson has been providing updates and provided a potential solar plan for the site to the Commission.

Affordable Housing – Accessory Apartments – Mrs. Block asked if the Commission only allows accessory apartments on two or more acre lots. Mr. Warner stated attached accessory apartments are allowed on smaller parcels, but detached accessory apartments need two or more acres. Mr. Warner stated detached apartments are usually tying in with the same septic system as the main house.

12. Adjournment

MOTION: Steve Bull motioned to adjourn. Wayne LePard second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

Bunny Hall Batzner
Recording Clerk

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 7 October 2021.