

**AD-HOC SENIOR AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALTERNATIVES STUDY  
MEETING MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2025**

By: Newton

Place: Conference Room B and ZOOM

Time: 2:01 p.m.

**1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:**

		PRESENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
REGULAR MEMBERS:	Christine Pattee		X	
	Dick Brand	X		
	Robin Newton	X		
	Richard Gold		X	
	Rick Martin	X		
	Diane Rutherford	X		
STAFF:	Jana Roberson, Dir. Planning & Development	X		
	Heidi Leech, Planning Tech./Zoning Enforcement Officer		X	
	Natalia Yeschick, Recording Clerk		X	

**2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:**

**Adoption of March 26, 2025 – Regular Meeting**

**MOTION: I move to approve the minutes of the March 26, 2025, Regular Meeting, with the following corrections:**

- Christine Pattee’s name to have the correct spelling of Christine, with an “e” on the end.

**Motion by: Brand**

**Seconded by: Rutherford**

Discussion: None

**Voting:**

For: Brand, Newton, Martin, Rutherford

Against: None

Abstain: None

**Motion Unanimously Approved.**

**3. DISCUSSION OF TWO-FAMILY RESIDENCES**

Newton explained Staff put together the sections that are relative to the topic of two family dwellings, our definitions, where they are currently permitted, whether or not they are permitted, and increased lot size categories. Newton stated the definitions are straight forward.

Roberson and Newton discussed the “family” definition and that we may want to remove it. Newton explained it does not meet the Supreme Court test. Roberson stated it should not be in there. The definition is not the big issue. The increased lot size for two family units is an issue. Roberson is surprised to find it is not permitted in some residential zones.

Brand mentioned the driveways being an issue. They only allow one driveway per lot so if you have a three family structure you have to have one driveway or a common driveway. If you do a duplex you can have one septic system and it is probably better off to have two. If you can fit two septic tanks in one leach field. As long as you can make the distance it should not be an issue. From the well to the property line you still have to meet that criteria. Roberson responded that if you kept with the standard minimum lot size for the zone and you have the space for the two septic systems why would you need a bigger lot? Either meet the public health code or not meet the public health code. Newton said that is essentially what was done in some smaller Towns. Two families are allowed by zoning permit with the same standards as a single family home. Newton mentioned if we get to a point where we are presenting to Planning and Zoning we can show examples of the footprint of a two family home is typically the same as the footprint of a single family home which are 3,500 - 4,500 square foot homes. The footprint of the two families are sometimes even less than that. The regulations have probably not been looked at in a long time. Roberson believes one of the big opposers of smaller minimum lot sizes was the health department. The technology for septic systems has changed a lot in the last 20 years so the septic system footprint has gone way down. Roberson stated the health department used to advocate for larger minimum lot sizes and she is thinking that was the right thing to do. Hopefully that thought has evolved. Newton explained that in these other smaller towns you can put a two family on a half an acre lot if you can get a septic system approved. We do not regulate public health code.

Rutherford asked if there is any information that there is a big call for two families in town? Newton responded no but a lot of the current developments and other towns are developing duplexes. Roberson said we have had homeowners come to Planning and Zoning asking why we are not allowing two families? Planning and Zoning would be receptive to a discussion for allowing two families.

R. Martin asked what is the stumbling block to building two family in the lake area? Newton responded that right now it is just not allowed. Roberson explained the zoning regulations are

the main stumbling block and the sewer capacity is probably second.

Newton says when she looks at zones where two families are allowed the river aquifer is one where she does not know about two family in that area. Roberson responded it has some different setbacks.

Newton believes that two family dwelling should be allowed anywhere you allow single family dwelling. Two family dwellings should not require any additional lot area than a single family. Whatever you require for a single family in that zoning district is that you should require for two families.

R. Martin asked when Newton says two family does she mean side by side or up and down? Newton responded either. R. Martin pointed out that if it is up and down you would not need as much property as side by side. Newton responded the footprint generally would not be different.

Rutherford doesn't believe it will be a giant need in Town but some people do need it or want it. Brand responded under future growth and development in some areas that will invite someone to do that it could be good income for someone. Maybe someone wants to build a few houses that all become rental. Newton mentioned that likely you would see people making their current homes into two families which means it is not going to be impactful to most because you are not seeing it because it is happening to the interior of the house. Newton does not believe we are going to change the regulation and have a lot of applications come in. Just having the opportunity for someone to do it in the regulations is what we are looking for. We cannot make development and affordable housing happen but if we can make the regulations more agreeable to those types of developments that is really what our committee is supposed to be here for. We are doing our job if we move that forward and try to make those positive changes and then promote them.

Rutherford asked if we have done anything about putting it in the Newsletter? Newton responded we have not. Roberson responded if we start on something now we can get something out for the summer. Roberson will find out when the deadline is for the next newsletter and send the committee and email. We can put something in it for ADU's. Newton agreed and stated that we got ADU's passed and we should put it in the next Newsletter.

Newton mentioned the last piece for two family is driveway criteria. Roberson says it just says two family dwellings must have a paved driveway. Newton is not opposed to this. Roberson mentioned it is cost. Newton responded we can take that out and say individual driveways for single family and two family homes need to be paved but shall have a compact non erosive surface. Brand brought up the apron requirements. Newton said they are all required to have an apron. Roberson can put it in the form of a zone change text change before our next meeting.

Roberson brought up the pages form to discuss. She also showed examples of office buildings being converted to multi family homes. We have an overstock of office space in the State. Roberson is planning the land use forum for 2025. We are hoping to have it on June 30 at the lodge. The topic is Affordable Housing, Sewers, and Protecting the Lake Watershed. The

purpose of this forum is to look at the issue and talk with some experts. Have some people speak and facilitate the conversation because there are a lot of people concerned about impacts to the lake. All of the conversation about promoting development scares people. We can promote smart and sustainable development and continue to protect and conserve our natural resources. None of the speakers are set yet. Newton suggested the name of a builder who may come speak. Roberson is also hoping someone from Clear come and speak. The most affordable neighborhood now is all around the lake. Not necessarily in front of the lake but those parcels further back with small pieces of land and small houses. Many of the older houses are getting torn down and newer homes are being built. There is an opportunity. We have road network and sewer services area. We also have water service on most of the lake watershed. There is a work group forming that wants to focus on promoting low impact development and they are very concerned about the lake water quality. Roberson is hoping to hold this forum and get people talking about our affordable housing needs and sewer needs and our needs to protect the lake and other watersheds in Town to promote a sustainable development for the future that includes Affordable Housing. Brand suggested having photos on display of the ADU's.

Brand has concerns about nitrates going into the lake from property owners lawns. Roberson brought up Lori Mathieu who is the Chair of the Wetlands Commission. She is the one conveying this low impact development group. Stormwater runoff into the lake is probably the biggest part of it and what property owners are doing to either hurt or help the problem. We want to promote a lot of riparian buffers, native species, and water infiltration. Sewer capacity versus septic is a big part of that conversation too because you can have groundwater contamination. Brand responded there is one thing with the sewers that when we go ask for grant money it is to improve water quality and health but it is not to induce growth and development. Roberson believes there is a growing recognition of the need for sewer and water infrastructure to promote sustainable development that is consistent with the State's policies. Brand responded if we get DEEP to allow fundings to be released even if we are adding housing. They only give money to correct an issue. Newton responded there have been changes at the legislative level. Roberson added there are new State departments like the Office of Responsible Growth. She added this ties into our CEPA review of the sewage treatment plant and that is why Roberson ejected herself into that process. Rutherford asked if we know about the capacity? Roberson responded we have a proposal to expand the capacity by 65,000 gallons. Brand added we do not have the answers yet.

#### **4. RFP HOUSING AUTHORITY - COLLECTED INFORMATION**

Roberson handed out a quote that was received previously. Newton suggested we can use that as our basis.

Newton explained she asked Roberson to gather information about the housing authority property so we can have a knowledgeable conversation about what exists on the property now. It does show wetlands that matches our wetlands map which gives Newton confidence it is fairly accurate.

R. Martin asked about the relationship between the committee and the Housing Authority? R. Martin explained when Laura Bradley was on the committee she mentioned the Housing

Authority was a semi-quasi public organization and they typically operate on their own. Where do they step in? Roberson responded they have endorsed this project of evaluating the property. There is money allocated for this project. They initially were under the impression we were going to give them the money to do a site evaluation for future housing. Roberson corrected them and said we want to do the site evaluation on their property and they are okay with it. They have endorsed it and it has been before their board a couple of times. We have a mutual goal of increasing the stock of affordable and senior housing.

R. Martin asked if we are approved to move forward where does the money come from to develop the property? Do they apply for it? Roberson responded it is to be determined. Newton explained they can apply for grants. Sometimes the Town and the Housing Authority will apply together because municipalities can have more grants they can apply for than just the Housing Authority. Ultimately it is the Housing Authority that would be looking for money to develop the site.

R. Martin asked if preparing a grant request is something someone should be working on now? Roberson responded when the RFP is done it will be part of the grant request. We are laying the groundwork. Rutherford asked if it is a combination of Federal and State grant money? Newton responded that it could be. It depends on what is available at the time. There are different grants that lend itself to senior housing in particular and a lot of times they are a mix of Federal Grant money and State money. Rutherford asked if we will only be looking for senior housing? Newton responded this will just be senior housing and not for disabled.

Brand explained they are HUD subsidized for the rent and it is not just senior. It is senior and people with disabilities. Originally it was set up for seniors and that is the criteria for disability.

Newton explained that all we are doing at this point is background work for the Housing Authority. We are looking at the feasibility of their property for expanding the housing. Essentially the end result would be a conceptual plan which they could then use to apply for grant money. Roberson explained that our goal is to demonstrate that it is possible.

R. Martin asked because two years ago our State representative Tim Acker signed onto a bill by Senator Osteen for \$9 Million for Lebanon to go before the Bond Commission and was specifically for senior housing in Lebanon. R. Martin is wondering if we should be talking to Acker to get him on board? Brand responded it is early. Brand had a conversation with Acker and explained to the commission we have to have a number to ask for a tentative plan.

Newton suggested we review the LADA proposal starting with number one which they have as "Prepare initial base map using publicly available information, review of soils, information online, identify potential wetlands area." They were going to charge \$1,250 for the first parcel. The wetlands area has already been done and that is something we can give the consultant when we put the RFP out. We can provide the plans Roberson received from the sanitary sewer installation. We can give them the GIS. It appears they are accurate. Newton also believes that for a conceptual plan it is not necessary to waste a lot of money on doing wetland delineations.

Brand mentioned we are looking for spilledable property because they are going to be on sewage. The only issue is the water supply distance and that is what we need to know.

Newton stated when we write this up any firm that we use is going to do their own base map. That is going to be a fee that is always going to be charged. As far as wetlands we can provide them with enough information that it is not going to be necessary to charge.

Newton read number two on the list which is "Meet with Town Officials to discuss project goals and project scope site visit to review areas identified as potential wetlands." Newton is not sure that will be necessary.

Newton read from the list "Identify potential site issues. Prepare a list of questions for Town Staff and project schedules." Newton explained they said it includes up to three meetings and would be a fee of up to \$3,500. It seems high as a consultant for what it is. What we are going to do when we do the RFP is be very specific about what we want the consultant to do and how that works. We are not going to give them what we think the phase should be but we will bullet point what we are expecting them to do. Brand asked what Newton's opinion is on following phase two? Brand goes on to say for the third phase we will potentially use the same floor plan or way out. The only thing that might change is if you were to put washers and dryers. He also explained it will not be families moving in. It will be a single or double unit or someone for assisted living in some manner. Brand asked if they could use what they already have and upgrade it? Newton responded we can see the layout and if that is what we are proposing our buildable area is going to be off. It is likely to go off to the side. We should identify the area that is going to happen on. Brand suggested we ask Laura Bradley her opinion before this goes out.

Rutherford asked if there is any talk about how many units? Newton responded no. Newton went on to say if we do what Brand suggests and we use the same floor plan that is there that is actually a good guide for any consultant because they can take a footprint of that and can replicate. Newton thinks it will be good to touch base with the Housing Authority and ask if they are doing an expansion if their thought process is to keep the same type of units they already have or do they have something else in mind?

Roberson mentioned when she spoke with Laurie she and her board are well aware the grove area is their potential future expansion area. In terms of what their understanding is of this parcel they are aware of where they would expand to. R. Martin asked if that is the 5 acres we keep discussing? Brand responded it started out as a reserved septic area and being that they are on the sewer that has changed. They are able to develop that property. Newton thinks two stories utilizes the space better and suggested sending an email to the Housing Authority. Brand does not think there is grading for that. Newton mentioned we can ask for conceptual layouts for both one story and two stories.

Newton read number three on the list which is to prepare a concept level site plan and explore two potential development options for the properties chosen for the study." This was written with the thought we were going to choose two properties to study. We should start with one and see how much money we expend. We are trying to keep costs down in the hopes that we then have money to look at another property in Town. Each plan will be a hand drawn schematic with grading and potential wetland locations. Newton read to contact Connecticut Water Company to determine location and capacity of the water line. We can do this on our side. Newton may have the information saved on our side and will look.

Brand asked what is the water tank the Town proposed? Roberson responded there is a plan and money allocated for a water tank. Roberson will ask the Town Manager for an update. It is going to be extra pressure to the village area. Newton mentioned getting the allocation numbers as they will be useful for whoever we hire as a consultant.

Brand mentioned that on the wastewater end when we were doing the senior housing project they planned for 6,500 gallons per day to reserve for senior housing. That was before the affordable housing which is the criteria for families which changes things. There are meters with represented data over three years. We can use that which is 60 gallons per person per day. The usage is lower because of the type of housing. We also know that a well is needed.

R. Martin asked if they put in a well would they charge residents for water? Brand responded he does not believe so.

Newton explained it is now to prepare the concept level plans. The fee that was proposed was \$5,500. The fees do not matter much because we will put it out to RFP and whoever gives us a bid back they will have their own fee schedule associated with it. They are proposing final concept plans.

Newton feels five and six are not needed.

Everyone is comfortable with the wetlands maps for a concept plan.

Newton mentioned the PERC test was another thing they had on and this is in plural because they were looking at multiple sites. It says our service by sanitary sewer line in Main Street is not required. However stormwater improvements may require testing to determine soil suitability for infiltration and compliance with DEEP. They were going to look at digging holes and performing testing. For a conceptual plan that may not be necessary.

Newton stated if everyone is good Newton will draft an RFP. Newton will ask Roberson to send it out a week prior to the next meeting for review. R. Martin asked who the RFP goes out to? Newton responded it typically goes onto the DAS website and Town website. If you wanted to, you could put it in the newspaper. Brand asked if Coventry has engineers on contract? Newton responded she does not think so because we have a Town engineer. Roberson responded that for specialized projects we can utilize Penney and St. Germain on this RFP and when we have a draft we can share it with them. Roberson mentioned Penney would help with basic concept plans. We do not have anyone on retainer.

R. Martin asked if the RFP will be out for a certain timeframe? Newton confirmed. You will have a start date for when it gets advertised on the website. You then can do a pre-bid meeting however this is a small project so that is not needed. You will then have a question and answer timeframe so the consultants can ask Staff questions and then it gets put up on the website for any of the potential consultants to see. That time is then closed off and the bids have to be in by a certain timeframe. They are typically opened to the public at that time. Newton is not sure if we have a low bid policy here and suggested we find out. Newton explained this is not a grant, this is money the Town set aside so we may have more leniency in how we pick out

consultant. Sometimes with grants you have to do a low bid unless you have a legitimate reason not to.

R. Martin mentioned we have \$25,000 and if we take out what Newton said we do not need we are down to about \$6,000. Newton responded she took the two properties and had done a spreadsheet. She added we have some firms that we use for conceptual plans and would direct solicit in addition to putting on the DS website. Newton mentioned we have a list of five other properties where if we have enough money left over we can take a look at and maybe narrow it down to one that would make sense. Since this is more senior housing and people with disabilities, whatever property we look at next should be more affordable housing oriented. We should stretch the \$25,000 as much as we can.

Rutherford asked if there is any way to do a mixture of senior and affordable housing in the same plot? Brand responded the conditions are already set on the property.

## **5. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 3:14 p.m. by Newton.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Natalia Yeschick*

Natalia Yeschick, Recording Clerk

*PLEASE NOTE: These motions are not official until approved by the AD-HOC Senior And Affordable Housing Alternatives Study at the next meeting. Please see the next meeting minutes for approval or changes.*