

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 25, 2022 – 7:30PM
HELD AT GOSHEN TOWN HALL AND BY ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

PRESENT: Chairman Don Wilkes, Cynthia Barrett, Lu-Ann Zbinden, Patrick Lucas, Laura Lemieux, William Clinton, Leya Edison and Jim Withstandley

EXCUSED:

OTHERS: Town Planner and Zoning Enforcement Officer Martin Connor (via Zoom), Attachment 1, is list of in person attendees and Attachment 2, is list of Zoom attendees.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND DESIGNATION OF ALTERNATES.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30PM. The meeting was conducted in person at Goshen Town Hall and virtually through Zoom and recorded digitally and no alternates were seated. Chairman read 10/26/21 meeting motion to approve Public Hearing for consideration to include the Affordable Housing Plan as part of the 2016 POCD. Chairman read the standard order of business for the meeting. Ms. Zbinden called on a vote to add a presentation with a co-presenter to the agenda prior to the public hearing. It has information that has not been given out prior to the Public Hearing. Chairman stated that sitting members may do so after the meeting is called to order, with a second motion and then a $\frac{2}{3}$ approval of seated members then it would be added to section 8 of the agenda. Ms. Zbinden then stated she made a request for this prior to the meeting, but was denied with no reasonable explanation. Chairman asked if she was making a motion now. Ms. Zbinden stated No. Chairman then read the rules of the Public Hearing and format.

IN A MOTION by Ms. Zbinden, and NOT seconded, to recuse two seated P&Z Commissioners that served on the Goshen Housing Plan steering committee from any discussion of the Goshen Housing Plan. Motion fails.

2. PUBLIC HEARING: Consideration to include the Affordable Housing Plan as part of the 2016 POCD.

The Commission Clerk read the legal advertisement for the Public Hearing into record. Ms. Edison asked if the meeting was advertised anywhere else and was told no it is not required to be. Ms. Edison continued with another question and was cut off by the Chairman for it not being appropriate. Mr. Connor, AICP read his memo dated 1/20/22 in regards to amending the 2016 Goshen Plan of Conservation & Development to include the Goshen Connecticut Housing Plan 2022-2027 into record. Applicant Mark Harris spoke on why this should be added to the POCD and spoke on the misinformation that has been going around

social media. Several seated board members asked questions. Mr. Peter Herbst, 6 Cornwall Drive, reviewed and pointed out that the housing plan has already been approved by the town and selectman and it is not about what should or should not be in the plan. Mr. Bob Valentine, 225 North Street, spoke on the issues the town could have with developers if this is not done and also spoke on the misinformation being put out around town. Mr. Mike Esposito, 70 Bentley Circle, spoke on red flags; the process is what bothers him; the people deserve a vote and that the decision is being made by a small number of people and it needs to be a town vote. Mr. Joseph Janice, 23 Ashley Drive, spoke on his history and feels that there is no reason why we cant have other people like him in town and that it is closed minded to feel that way. Scott Tillmann, 843 North Street, gave a brief history of his family in Goshen then spoke on the land acquisition money that is earmarked for open space and recreation. It was voted 2 times by the town not to be used for housing. If they do use it for housing it would go against what the townspeople voted for. Ms. Lu-Ann Zbinden, seated Commissioner P&Z, read her statement and that is attachment 3 with the minutes. Ms. Leya Edison, alternate non-seated Commissioner P&Z, 130 East Hyerdale Drive, read her statement and that is attachment 4 with the minutes. Mr. Mike Esposito, 70 Bentley Circle, had a question for Mr. Connor or Mr. Harris on if the 25 units is forever and if it can be changed. This was a discussion had by several of the people attending the meeting. Ms. Lynette Miller, 35 Rockwall Court, spoke on the lack of the town using the moratorium, various state statutes, how the town survey was done, cluster housing and deed restrictions. Ms. Lorraine Lucas, 21 Bartholomew Hill Road, spoke on the land acquisition money as well and the fact that it is earmarked for open space and recreation and the town voted that it should not be used for housing. Mr. Peter Kujawski, 6 Bentley Circle, said we should be thanking the people who put this plan together, spoke on liability that comes from not following the town rules, spoke on scatter sites and 830g.

IN A MOTION by Mr. Wilkes, first by Ms. Lemieux and seconded by Mr. Wilkes, it was VOTED to close the Public Hearing on Consideration to include the Affordable Housing Plan as part of the 2016 POCD. Motion carries 9:04pm.

3. **READING OF THE MINUTES:** The Commission reviewed the minutes from December 28, 2021, regular meeting. Correction of the date of the meeting from July 28, 2020 to December 28, 2021.

IN A MOTION by Ms. Lemieux and seconded by Ms. Barrett, it was voted to accept the minutes. Mr. Lucas and Ms. Zbinden abstained. Motion carries.

4. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. **59 Old Middle Street - Determination as to whether a year round farm stand would be an extension of the principal agricultural use which is permitted use in the RA-2 Zone.** Mr. Weigold reviewed his memo dated 1/10/22 and that he was interested in having a year round farmstand. Mr. Connor wanted to have the board discuss to see if it would still fall under the RA-2 Zoning and feels that they can make that determination. There was a discussion by the board and Mr. Connor stated he had added a new zoning for a full time farm stand in Burlington and would be happy to supply the members with that so they can review before the next meeting and continue discussion then with more information.

5. **OLD BUSINESS: None**

6. **ZONING ENFORCEMENT OFFICER'S REPORT: Tabled until next meeting.**

IN A MOTION by Mr. Lucas and seconded by Ms. Barrett, it was voted to table the ZEO report until the next meeting. Motion carries.

7. **CORRESPONDENCE: None**

8. **OTHER BUSINESS PROPER TO COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION: None**

9. **ADJOURNMENT:**

IN A MOTION made by Mr. Lucas to adjourn the meeting at 9:25PM. Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,



Lori Clinton
Commission Clerk

Received Jan 27th, 2022 2:00 P.M

Attest Parcell H. Kline ASST.
Goshen Town Clerk

SIGN IN SHEET

PLANNING & ZONING MEETING 1/25/22

Attachment 1

30 in person
98 zoom

1. PETER HEARST
2. Todd Cantor
3. SIOTT OLSON
4. MICHAEL EDISON
5. MIKE ESPOSTO
6. Marty Harris
7. Marky Harris
8. Bob Valentine
9. Susan Marino
10. Scott Tillmann
11. Lisa Tillmann
12. ~~Jim Winstanley~~ Board member
13. Paul Collins
14. ERIC ZOCKOFF
15. BRYAN BEAUSOLEIL
16. Dawna Beausoleil
17. Doug Rubner
18. Lorraine Lucas
19. Dan Lucas
20. Don + Sarah Vallera
21. Tom Borden
22. R. Weng
23. Cara Weigold
24. N Glass & Glass
25. Kately & Felix Sambuca
26. Jean Curtis
27. Alan Rubenoff
28. Bob Harmon
29. 30 Monica + Ray Piroth

P&Z Meeting 1/25/2022 Attendees via Zoom Attachment 2

1. Russ Hurley
2. Audrey Blodien
3. Heidi Koenig
4. Patrick Daly
5. Fiona Ocain
6. James martin
7. Dawn Wilks
8. Joe Macaluso
9. Michaul Brigitte
10. Bill Lane
11. Julia Grosclaude
12. Henrietta Horvay
13. Debbie Bradwein
14. Joyce Mowrey
15. Jerry Abrahams
16. #
17. Mady Flynn
18. Carl Cohen
19. Mark
20. Cathlerin Vlasto
21. Dexter
22. Iphone Guest
23. Barbara Lowenthal
24. Peter Kujawaski
25. Judiths Ipad
26. Maria Rosa Garcia Otero
27. Mary
28. Johanna Kimball
29. Shilo Garcea
30. Steve Cohen
31. Howard Andrews
32. 914-5392530
33. David Boisvert
34. ifd9157@aol.com
35. Iphone7mr
36. Janet Hooper
37. Barbara Breor
38. Alissa Riley

P&Z meeting on January 25, 2022:

I would have a difficult time supporting this Housing Plan as written. Firstly, the Plan is titled "Housing Plan" not "Affordable Housing Plan" although "Housing Plan" may be a more apropos name as this plan is less about affordable housing and more about opening the Town of Goshen up for widespread development.

In 2019 P&Z voted to remove the 4-acre requirement for one accessory apartment per property. One of the proposals in the "Housing Plan" is to now allow two (2) accessory apartments one attached and one detached per property on less than 4 acres. Other proposals are to allow larger homes to be converted into 2-4 units with Health District approval and to amend the Town's Zoning Regulations to allow up to 4 attached townhouse style homes on parcels, two-family homes or duplexes and multi-family housing. If taken altogether this plan would lead to uncontrolled growth in Goshen possibly impacting the small-town character, increasing taxes, and creating an overabundance of homes making it hard for homeowners to sell their houses, a situation that Goshen was experiencing before the pandemic in 2020. Goshen needs smart controlled growth! The "Housing Plan" also does not provide any data on trends in demographics, population growth, job growth etc. for Goshen in the next 5 - 10 years. Are all these proposed changes necessary in 2022? What is the rush? Any of these proposals can come before P&Z any time and be evaluated on their own merit.

Another proposal is to consider allowing a 2-acre minimum lot size in some areas currently zoned to require a 5-acre minimum lot size. There is no way to ensure that 2-acre minimum lots will be sold as affordable. Big homes currently exist on lots in Goshen that are less than 5-acres. Why does Goshen need to make more smaller lots available when there are small lots for sale that have not sold in years? Many lots are still available in approved subdivisions that were never completed. The Meadowcrest subdivision specifically is a conservation subdivision with 29 lots that was approved in 2004 permitting higher density. Only 4 homes have been built to date. Why couldn't some of these lots be sold for affordable housing, if needed? Two (2) other subdivisions Pond Ridge and Tyler Ridge both approved in 2006 for 12 lots and 8 lots respectively have never been completely developed. Only 4 homes have been built at Pond Ridge and only one foundation has been built at Tyler Ridge. Real estate for sale signs can be seen in front of all these subdivisions. I have pictures available for anyone who would like to see them.

I don't feel comfortable either about incorporating the use of Title 67 funds into the POCD when the townspeople of Goshen have more than once rejected allowing non-profits to use those funds.

Lastly, I would like to comment on the goal to seek funds that could be available to purchase existing single-family homes that come up for sale and renovate them as needed for sale to income eligible home buyers. There have been instances where town officials, strong advocates of affordable housing, renovated modest size homes on small lots in town, but did not apparently deed restrict these properties for affordable housing as the "Housing Plan" shows zero "Deed Restricted Units" in Goshen. These renovated homes would have made ideal affordable units. Additionally, attempts to consider putting existing apartments into affordable housing in accordance with Item #4 "Qualify Existing Apartments as Affordable under State Law" on page 20 of the 2016 POCD were met unfavorably. If you truly believe in your cause, the way to get people behind it is to lead by example. Putting pressure on taxpayers just isn't as persuasive! When it comes to affordable housing in Goshen I think "leading by example" has been missing! THIS TO ME IS BIG!

The Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is required to be updated every 10 years and can be updated before that if the town approves. I don't think incorporating a document such as the Goshen Housing Plan with its sweeping changes inside the 2016 POCD is democratic because it bypasses the townspeople who should be allowed to have a say about growth and development in their town! I think we should have a moratorium on zone changes on any exceptions to the current zoning regulations and the Commission should re-evaluate the current six zones if Goshen wishes to make changes. I would also propose holding a referendum for the purpose of allowing the townspeople of Goshen to vote on adding the "Housing Plan" into the 2016 POCD.

Presentation for P&Z Meeting

January 25, 2022

On Sept 21, 2021 an independent, professional review of the Goshen Housing Plan Survey was produced by Conquest Solutions of Avon, CT. Conquest is a firm specializing in digital marketing, market research and analysis for commercial and non-profit clients throughout CT.

While the review took no issue with the more straight-forward questions, which generally revolved around collection of demographic data, it found several other questions unclear, ambiguous, poorly worded and likely to result in skewed data that would be meaningless to the survey.

Particular issue was taken with questions #7, 8 and 9; which go to the heart of establishing the need for affordable housing in Goshen. The questions either lacked clarity in their wording or failed to define a significant word in the question, making it unusable.

Another question #12 asks “what do you think the town of Goshen needs more of: Check all that apply:”

1. Housing options that allow older adults to downsize
2. Rental options seniors can afford
3. Rental options young families and young adults can afford
4. programs that allow older adults to remain in their homes by helping with their rehabilitation costs
5. First time buyer options for renters, and OTHER: (please specify)”

This question and the potential choices are leading, as it implies affordable housing options are **needed** in Goshen. At a minimum, a response of “none of the above” should have been included as an option to that question.

NOT EVERYONE IN GOSHEN BELIEVES AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS NEEDED and this question provides NO OPPORTUNITY to voice that opposition. It’s a biased question, and so the data gleaned from it is not meaningful.

The 2nd Report dated Oct-2021 is an analysis and report on several data-related items in the Goshen Connecticut Housing Plan 2022-2027. The report uncovers multiple problems—including incorrect information, misleading information and FALSE information.

#1. There were inadequate numbers of responses to provide any meaningful statistical understanding of the opinions of the people in Goshen, as the respondents to the survey numbered only 112 which represents 3.9% of the population. A data set of this size was “inadequate to properly extrapolate data and may not be meaningful”. For example, in response to question #12, the COG report says 61% think the town needs a downsize option. But that 61% is only in regard to the 112 respondents answering the survey. Therefore, it is 61% of 112 people or 2.4% of Goshen’s population.

#2. On the Rental options for young adults, seniors and programs for first time buyers, the report says 47-48% support those options, but in reality, it is only 1.8-1.9% of the town’s population.

The COG report continues with the analysis of the Median sale prices of houses in Goshen from 2016 to 2020. The claim is that the median sales price in Goshen has risen by \$133,750.00 in that time period. While technically accurate it is extremely misleading.

During the meeting on Aug 2nd, 2021, the question was asked of the former 1st Selectman whether this data represented the abnormal effect of Covid on home sale prices. The former 1st Selectman responded, stating that the original data was precovid. (There is a recording to verify this). This was not a true statement.

In fact, according to survey analysis, the ENTIRETY of that increase was during the period where sales boomed **due** to COVID.

In fact, housing prices in Goshen FELL in 2010 and did not recover until 2020 during Covid. But the writers of the plan based their entire argument on the question of **need**, with this faulty information.

The true values of Goshen property can be gleaned from the town’s own tax assessment records, which were forwarded to me by the Town’s Tax Office. The town list provided dollar values to each property listed. This list was scrutinized for duplicates (77), which were removed and arranged by \$ value. Here are the results:

Amount	Total # with no dupl.	Listed #'s with no dupl.	Values \$
under-\$200K	184	#4-187	84,620-199,680
Under \$250K	220	#188-#408	200,110-249,820
Under \$300K	283	#409-#692	250440-299,960

Under \$350K	254	#693-947	300,080-349,730
total <\$350	941		
Under \$400K	173	#948-1121	350,070-399,900
Under \$450K	133	#1122-1255	400,290-448,730
Under \$500K	77	#1256-1333	450,160-499,900
Under \$550K	61	#1334-1395	501,170-548,630
Under \$600K	75	#1354-1429	550,600-599,700
Under \$700K	47	#1430-1472	601,230-696,320
Under \$800K	17	#1473-1490	702,280-797,700
Under \$900K	14	#1491-1505	800,910-895,390
total < \$1 Mil	597		
Under \$1 Mil	21	#1506-1527	900,000-999,560
Under \$1.2 Mil	56	#1528-1584	1,001,610-1,119,600
Under \$1.5 Mil	30	#1585-1615	1,221,740-1,496,800
Under \$2 Mil	21	#1616-1637	1,579,450-1,998,120
Under \$4 Mil	14	#1638-1652	2,012,450-3,634,570
total < \$4 Mil	142		

This means there are over 400 properties listed at affordable rates.

Anyone who would like a copy of these analyses, please come see me.

It has been admitted that the data incorporated in this plan is based strictly on a relatively small number of actual home sales and not on the value of Goshen's entire housing stock. During the August 2nd meeting, even the former 1st Selectman conceded that the data used for this plan

represented only actual homes sold during a certain period and does not reflect the value of the rest of Goshen's houses which the above values prove.

#3. Data on "Cost burdened Households".

According to the HOUSING plan, more than 27% of Goshen households are cost burdened. That is not accurate. The Census Bureau's data (which this report **claims** to have used) shows that the 27% figure relates only to people with mortgages. However, in Goshen only 52% of homes have mortgages. Thus, the actual % is only 13.72% which is relatively low.

This should lead all of us to ask "where is the need for affordable housing". And why are they trying to move this into the POCD now. What's the rush? The surveys paid for by the Town to the COG were poorly written and unrepresentative of Goshenites.

But there is more to this issue. Instead of using the State guidelines for assembling this AHPC, where many different points of view were to be incorporated, it was organized with conflicts of interest built in, and a predetermined conclusion in mind.

It is with great disappointment that I find that those who have questioned this plan, provided information showing defects in the survey and the plan itself, and generally showed differing views from the "hand selected" Affordable Housing committee members..... were met with intimidation, personal attacks and outright bullying. Such comments as "if you are against Affordable housing then you are a bigot" remain in my mind and are troubling. We should NOT vote for this plan being placed in the POCD as it is flawed and does NOT represent an honest reflection of Goshenites' views. Because these issues are so important for the future of Goshen, I would propose that we put a moratorium on all new exceptions, appeals or changes to Goshen's P&Z regulations until a review of all current zones can be re-evaluated as a whole.

Respectfully submitted,
Leya L. Edison
Commissioner (alternate)

