

**CITY OF NORWALK
AD HOC HOUSING COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - MARCH 26, 2026
BY ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

ATTENDEES: Nicole Eaddy (Chair), Darlene Young, Jan Degenshein, Colin Hosten, Jalen Seed, Johan Lopez.

STAFF: Michelle Andrzejewski, Steve Kleppin.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Eaddy called the regular meeting of the Ad Hoc Housing Committee to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the March 26, 2026 meeting held by Zoom virtual meeting.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Eaddy conducted roll call and confirmed that Mr. Hosten, Mr. Seed, and Mr. Lopez (visiting) were present along with Mr. Kleppin and Ms. Andrzejewski. Ms. Young joined the meeting around 6:05 p.m. and Mr. Degenshein joined at 6:06 p.m., at which point Ms. Eaddy announced that a quorum was now achieved.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: February 19th, 2026

Ms. Eaddy initially stated that the minutes of the February 19th, 2026 regular meeting would be tabled because there was no quorum at the very start of the meeting. Once quorum was achieved, the minutes were brought forward for consideration.

****MR. DEGENSHEIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 19TH, 2026 REGULAR MEETING.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS PRESENTED.**

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Eaddy asked Ms. Andrzejewski if anyone was present for public participation. Ms. Andrzejewski reported that nobody was present on the call for public participation. Ms. Eaddy then closed the public participation portion of the meeting.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Affordable Housing Account Ordinance

Ms. Eaddy turned the discussion over to Mr. Kleppin or Ms. Andrzejewski. Mr. Kleppin reviewed the revised language for the Affordable Housing Account Ordinance that had been sent

out with the meeting packet. He noted that he had gone back after the previous meeting and made changes highlighted in red. Mr. Kleppin explained that he had spoken with Lamond after the last meeting and that the committee that would eventually review proposals for funds would need to finalize the document, but that it made sense for this group to vet it and consider it in a good state to pass on to the larger group.

Mr. Kleppin walked the committee through the changes and asked if there were any lingering questions. He specifically addressed whether there should be a cap on the funds or a minimum distribution amount, noting that without some kind of potential cap on a drawdown or particular request, the funds could get depleted by one large project and take a couple of years to replenish given the limited funds in the account and the price tag for any construction project.

Mr. Kleppin reviewed number 3 of the ordinance and explained that the language came out of the discussion at the last meeting regarding what happens if a development already has units that do not comply with the current program requirements above. He described a scenario where someone had developed 50 units on a property but currently had only 25 units, with 3 of those already deed-restricted at 80 percent SMI under the city's workforce housing program. He stated that number 3 would allow such developments to still participate in the program provided that what gets added complies with the requirements of number 1 or 2 above, essentially grandfathering the existing units. Ms. Young asked for an example of what that could look like with an existing deed-restricted unit that does not comply. Mr. Kleppin confirmed that the new units added would need to comply while the existing ones would be grandfathered. Ms. Eaddy and Mr. Kleppin discussed deed restrictions on accessory dwelling units when selling the property, confirming that the restriction would remain only on the ADU portion and that the new buyer would be required to rent the ADU to someone meeting the 80 percent SMI requirement.

Mr. Kleppin reviewed number 4 regarding accessory dwelling units and the requirement for a deed restriction at 80 percent SMI, noting that 80 percent SMI is still a fairly substantial number and would not be overly restrictive.

Mr. Degenshein asked whether there was an enforcement agency in effect to make sure deed-restricted ADUs remain rented at the proper rate. Mr. Kleppin explained that Planning and Zoning, along with Ms. Andrzejewski, handles that through annual reporting for both ADUs (where one unit must be owner-occupied) and all workforce housing deed-restricted units. He added that current staffing levels could handle enforcement given the realistic production expected from these changes, though if there were hundreds more ADUs it might need to be revisited.

Mr. Kleppin noted that he had added one more zone to the location section—the CD3 zone—because it is a multifamily zone that borders the CD4 zone and is near places of employment, transportation, and infrastructure. Ms. Eaddy asked Mr. Kleppin to give an overview of the areas covered by each zone. Mr. Kleppin described the CD3 zone as including areas around the hospital (where zoning had been changed to allow more density due to the hospital being a massive employer), the urban core CD4 zone running from the Wall Street area south of the train station between the river and Route 7 with MLK Drive to the south, Lexington Avenue, areas west of West Avenue, and parts along Main Avenue and New Canaan Avenue. He displayed a

zoning map and oriented the committee, pointing out the Merritt Parkway, New Canaan Avenue, the hospital area, the train station, Wall Street, West Avenue, Washington Street, MLK Drive, East Avenue corridor near Stu Leonard's, City Hall, Interstate 95, and East Norwalk with the East Norwalk train station. Mr. Kleppin confirmed that CD3W (Rowayton) was not included for the scoring criteria related to project location.

Mr. Hosten asked whether there was a mechanism for clawing back some or all funds if they are not used according to their requested purpose. Mr. Kleppin explained that funds would be dispersed after the Certificate of Zoning Compliance is issued once the project is fully completed, meaning applicants would need to float some funds initially but the city would not release funds for a project that goes nowhere. Ms. Eaddy asked whether this is how other towns handle similar programs and how the process would work for a rehab project or helping a homeowner who might have an affordable unit. Mr. Kleppin confirmed the same completion-based process would apply, with funds released once the work is inspected, kitchens installed, and everything buttoned up.

The committee discussed fund replenishment. Ms. Eaddy referenced the two larger projects that had brought in over a million dollars and asked about the size of those projects. Mr. Kleppin identified the largest as the 400-unit Pinnacle project on West Avenue (the Waypoint project across from the Y site), which contributed a little over a million dollars, while many smaller projects contribute between \$5,000 and \$15,000. Ms. Eaddy and Mr. Seed discussed how commercial businesses are now contributing to the fund and noted that new commercial projects such as a Home Depot would bring in significant amounts. Mr. Seed pointed out that as land becomes scarce in Norwalk, larger projects may become less frequent, so the fund may not be replenished as quickly and additional funding sources should be considered.

Mr. Hosten asked about city contributions to the fund and whether they would be reflected in the capital budget or the operating budget. Mr. Kleppin stated that it is likely in operating and noted that the language allows for grants, donations, or city contributions. He mentioned that in the past the redevelopment agency had contributed \$50,000 a year to a capital fund and discussed possibilities such as allocating year-end surpluses. Ms. Young and Mr. Seed emphasized the importance of keeping the funds from becoming depleted and identifying ways to keep them flowing, noting that the current balance (approximately \$2 million) is not a large amount in the context of development costs.

Ms. Young questioned the composition of the future committee, asking about the benefit of including the community services chief of staff position (currently vacant) versus someone with more appropriate knowledge or experience in building, renting, or development, or possibly someone from the Housing Authority. Mr. Kleppin noted that a recommendation had already been made to remove him from the committee and replace that seat with a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission since staff would still support the group. Discussion followed regarding the value of having Planning and Zoning Commission representation, the possibility of including someone from the Fair Housing Commission, and potential conflicts of interest if an active professional in construction or planning were to serve. Mr. Degenshein agreed that retired professionals might be preferable to avoid ethics concerns. Mr. Seed supported having staff with

built-in expertise to fill knowledge gaps since other committees do not have specific requirements.

The committee discussed the process for submitting and vetting candidates for the committee. Ms. Young asked how potential candidates' resumes would be submitted and what role this committee would have in selecting or reviewing them. Ms. Andrzejewski explained that resumes should be sent to her, that the city had posted notices on Facebook, and that approximately 14 applications had been received and were being vetted by Brendolyn Williams, Director of Policy and Strategy. Ms. Eaddy and Ms. Young expressed that the committee should have the opportunity to review the candidates, especially the resident portions, and provide input rather than having selections made solely by the mayor's office. Mr. Seed suggested that the ordinance wording could be revised during future discussion to allow for greater committee input.

Mr. Degenshein raised the possibility of using excess city-owned properties for affordable housing, noting that land values are high and that such properties could potentially be set aside and developed by a chosen developer or the housing authority. Ms. Young and Ms. Eaddy agreed it was a worthwhile idea to explore as a way to address the housing need. Mr. Kleppin recommended reviewing the Affordable Housing Action Plan, which contains a whole section on this topic. Ms. Young added that private-public partnerships on city-owned properties should also be considered.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

No new business was discussed.

VII. DISCUSSION

All discussion items were addressed under the Old Business section.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

****MS. YOUNG MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.
**THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE MEETING WAS
ADJOURNED.**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Courtney Baldwin
Recording Secretary