

**CITY OF NORWALK
AD HOC AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JULY 24, 2025
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

ATTENDANCE: Nora Niedzielski-Eichner (Chair), Nicole Eaddy, Jalin T. Sead, Sr.
Nicol Ayers, Darlene Young

STAFF: Michelle Andrzejewski

OTHER: Steve Kleppin

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:03 PM by Chair Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner, who welcomed attendees and explained that additional members were expected to join shortly.

II. ROLL CALL

At the beginning of the meeting, Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner, Ms. Eaddy, and Mr. Sead were present.

Ms. Ayers joined at approximately 6:10 PM, and Ms. Young joined at approximately 6:13 PM, completing the quorum.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Due to the absence of a quorum the approval of minutes from the May 29, 2025 regular meeting was delayed. After a quorum was achieved, the committee returned to this agenda item.

**** MS. EADDY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF MAY 29, 2025.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

There were no changes, corrections, or omissions proposed.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Under old business, the committee received an update from Ms. Andrzejewski on the Affordable Housing Plan Action Tracker. Ms. Andrzejewski reported on recent Planning and Zoning Commission amendments to workforce housing regulations.

The new amendments included a provision permitting a 5% density bonus for developments of ten or more units, further regulatory updates so that two-bedroom units now count as one and a half workforce units and three-bedroom units count as two, and an added provision so that tenants in workforce housing may remain eligible if their income, upon annual recertification, is up to 90% of State Median Income.

The committee discussed that these changes were intended to incentivize creation of much-needed larger affordable apartments and provide greater stability for workforce housing residents.

Additionally, a regulatory safeguard was noted, capping certain incentives should the city's affordable housing stock reach twelve percent.

The committee also discussed targeted strategies regarding tax abatement, including a potential program specifically tailored to address identified affordable housing needs.

It was noted that three legislative proposals had recently been submitted to the Mayor's office for legal review: support for urban grocery stores, encouragement of condominium or homeownership development, and granting the Norwalk Housing Authority right of first refusal on tax-delinquent properties.

The committee agreed to continue progress on these items during August through working sessions, while the regular August meeting would likely be cancelled. The next formal meeting was anticipated for September.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

The committee then heard an informational presentation on missing middle housing by Ms. Andrzejewski and Mr. Kleppin.

The presentation defined missing middle housing as a range of options, including duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhouses, and cottage courts that provide alternatives between single-family homes and large apartment complexes.

Ms. Andrzejewski explained that such housing types have seldom been constructed since the 1940s in Norwalk due to restrictive zoning, contributing to a lack of affordable, diverse housing options. Examples of these building types in Norwalk were discussed, and the need to encourage more two- and three-bedroom workforce units was examined.

Mr. Kleppin elaborated on regulatory changes, noting that new zoning now allows reasonably-scaled infill projects such as townhouses on 18-foot lots, thus broadening housing options for families and individuals.

The committee proceeded to discuss accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

Mr. Kleppin provided an overview of recent changes to the city’s ADU policies including the liberalization of rules to permit both attached and detached ADUs, still subject to some restrictions such as owner occupancy and site plan requirements for detached units.

Both Mr. Kleppin and Ms. Andrzejewski discussed potential next steps, such as the adoption of pre-approved ADU designs and possible further regulatory streamlining to lower barriers for property owners considering this option.

A need for resident-friendly materials explaining the ADU process was emphasized. Ms. Ayers and Ms. Eaddy both asked about the creation of a clear “one-pager” summary for residents and contractors, as confusion persists on ADU regulations and procedures.

It was noted that ADU applications continue to rise slowly, but current numbers are insufficient to meet the city’s housing needs.

The committee agreed that expanding the supply of ADUs and missing middle units—even when market rate—would contribute to overall housing affordability in Norwalk, though deed-restricted affordability remained economically challenging for most ADUs.

Mr. Kleppin confirmed that, consistent with city law, any residential development with more than ten units is subject to the inclusionary zoning requirement for designated affordable units.

VII. DISCUSSION

The committee continued with a broad discussion about strategies to address housing needs among those hit hardest by the crisis, including families, seniors, communities of color, and people with disabilities.

The members considered how to make regulations, application processes, and outreach more inclusive and transparent, in line with legal requirements.

Ms. Ayers, Ms. Young, and Mr. Sead raised the issue of illegal apartments, emphasizing the dual need for code-compliance and resident protections against displacement.

The committee acknowledged that as land suitable for new development becomes increasingly scarce, focusing on infill, conversions of underused commercial or office properties, and cultivating creative public-private partnerships would be vital.

Ms. Eaddy inquired about the potential for compiling a list of vacant or underused commercial buildings that might be repurposed for housing, specifically on Connecticut Avenue, and urged

that future regulatory or incentive policies support creation of deeply affordable workforce housing in such locations.

Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner and Mr. Kleppin discussed possible strategies, and Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner suggested outreach to local employers to better understand the housing needs of their workforce.

The matter of future meeting scheduling was discussed, with the consensus being that the full committee would next convene in September, though some working group activities and communications would continue over the August break.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:42PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Courtney Baldwin