

**CITY OF NORWALK
AD HOC AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - NOVEMBER 20, 2025
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

ATTENDEES: Nora Niedzielski-Eichner (Chair), Nicole Eaddy, Jalin Sead, Darlene Young.

STAFF: Michelle Andrzejewski.

OTHERS: Michele Conderino (CEO, Open Doors) Kirill Elin (Senior Director of Operations, Open Doors).

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner noted that only Ms. Eaddy and Mr. Sead were present and that quorum was not yet achieved. Additional members joined later in the meeting.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: October 23rd, 2025

This item was deferred at the beginning of the meeting due to lack of quorum. It was taken up at the conclusion of the meeting after quorum was achieved.

****MS. YOUNG MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 23, 2025 REGULAR MEETING AS SUBMITTED.**

****MR. SEAD SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Cece addressed the Committee regarding an ongoing technical issue with Zoom access to city meetings, noting that the public feed often begins after the meeting has already started. Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner thanked Ms. Cece for the feedback and stated that staff would follow up on the matter. No other members of the public requested to speak.

V. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business discussed.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Presentation and discussion with Open Doors – Michele Conderino & Kirill Elin

Ms. Conderino, CEO of Open Doors, and Mr. Elin, Senior Director of Operations, provided a detailed presentation on Open Doors' experience as an affordable housing developer in Norwalk, with particular focus on their current project at 24 Berkeley Street (five 3-bedroom townhouse-style units with garages, deeply affordable). Ms. Conderino reviewed the organization's history of acquiring and operating affordable housing since 1996, their current portfolio of 55 units, the challenges of acquiring property in a competitive market, the lengthy state financing and permitting process, value engineering requirements, and the recent October 2024 closing on state financing. She noted that the project had previously received local approvals and a foundation permit, but the permit had lapsed and required re-permitting.

Ms. Conderino and Mr. Elin discussed local and state barriers to producing more affordable housing, including high construction costs, lengthy permitting timelines, restrictive state accessibility and design standards, difficulty competing with market-rate developers for land or buildings, and the need for greater city coordination to alert nonprofit developers to properties coming available. They suggested the city consider mechanisms to notify mission-driven developers of opportunities, streamline permitting, revisit restrictions on boarding houses/rooming houses and unrelated occupants, allow more multifamily housing and ownership opportunities (condominiums) in suburban zones, and encourage adaptive reuse of commercial buildings.

Ms. Eaddy asked about tenant selection criteria for the Berkeley Street project. Ms. Conderino explained that applications would be posted publicly near certificate of occupancy, prioritized by income and family composition, with preference considered for those living or working in Norwalk if permitted, and that credit checks would not be used while certain serious criminal backgrounds would disqualify applicants. Ms. Young expressed strong appreciation for the work of Open Doors and emphasized the need to continue expanding diverse housing types throughout all areas of the city. Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner thanked the presenters for their expertise and creative ideas and indicated several items would be followed up on, including potential Redevelopment Agency notification procedures, condominium barriers, boarding house regulations, and ongoing permitting improvements.

VII. DISCUSSION

All discussion occurred under Item VI.A above. No separate discussion item was taken up.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:02 p.m. following approval of the October 23, 2025 minutes. Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner noted that the committee would attempt to schedule a December meeting if possible and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Respectfully Submitted,
Courtney Baldwin
Recording Secretary