

**CITY OF NORWALK
NORWALK COMMON COUNCIL
AD HOC AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 23RD, 2025
6:00PM**

ZOOM conferencing

ATTENDANCE: Nora Niedzielski-Eichner, Chairperson; Jalin Sead, Nicole' E'addy; Heather Dunn (6:02PM); Johan Lopez (6:03PM), Darlene Young (6:05PM),

OTHERS: Michelle Andrzejewski (P&Z), Steve Kleppin (P&Z), John Emmeus Davis (Presenter)

CALL TO ORDER

Councilperson Niedzielski-Eichner called the meeting to order at 6:02PM.

ROLL CALL

Councilperson Niedzielski-Eichner indicated who from the committee was present and that there would be other member joining shortly.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

****COUNCILPERSON NIEDZIELSKI-EICHNER MADE MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES WITH EDIT TO CORRECT MS. EADDY'S NAME.**

****THE MOTION PASSED** Three in favor (Councilperson Niedzielski-Eichner, Sead, and E'addy) with one abstention (Councilperson Dunn).

*****VOTE PASSES**

Councilperson Niedzielski- Eichner started to open up the presentation on community land trust from John Davis. Which he is one of the nation's leading experts in community land trusts and will be explaining what a community land trust is. He is a city planner working since 1993 consulting on community land trusts and began his career as a Housing Director in Burlington Vermont. Many of his publications can be found on the Lincoln Institute website.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Cece spoke making clarifying remarks on when she could make comments on the CLT presentation but decided she will submit comments, if she has any, in writing after she has seen the presentation.

Ms. Brinton commented on how we need to tie affordable housing and land use to the school system. She focused on how we use out land generate money to help pay for the city. She doesn't want to see the city go one way with our land use and another with our schools. She clarified that she is for open space and cost neutrality on land.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Presentation on Community Land Trusts by John Emmeus David (informational only)

Mr. Davis opened up the presentation by saying he will cover some of the results and highlights out of the newest publication of “Preserving Affordable Homeownership”.

He said there are 320 Community land trusts in the USA as of January 2025. These community land trusts or CLT’s around the United States are all different and use different mechanism to make them work. It is not a one size fits all approach across the board it depends on the communities wants and needs.

He said the international center for CLT’s put together a generic definition of “community-led development on community-owned land of homes (and other assets) that remain permanently affordable”. He breaks down the generic definition starting with the L in CLT, who owns what? He says nonprofit corporation owns parcels of land scattered across a large or small territory. Then homeowners, cooperatives, nonprofits organizations, or private businesses own buildings on the CLT’s land. The dual ownership ties the building and land together. The T in CLT is the care of land and housing entrusted to CLT also known as stewardship. What CLT do is preserve affordability, preserve quality, protect security of tenure. The C in CLT is guiding and governing the nonprofit corporation. This is composed of residents of the CLT’s service area, public interest representatives or public officials, and leaseholders which are the homeowners, renters, gardeners, businesses. Some CLT’s are form with an already existing nonprofit and they grow adding a CLT’s to their plate.

Mr. Davis shifted gears to start to discuss public assisted owner-occupied housing which is municipal government and land trust partnering to create CLT’s. Which again preserve the affordability of home subsidized with public investment and/or produced through inclusionary incentives or mandates. He shared the top 6 activities spur support from public officials which included:

1. Providing homeownership for households who are priced out of the market
2. Protecting the affordability of home that have been subsidized with public funds.
3. Constructing affordability priced housing on vacant lots.
4. Constructing energy-efficient and durable homes that will last for generations.
5. Rehabilitating buildings that have fallen into disrepair.
6. Preventing foreclosures in affordably priced homes.

Then he continues to show slides on results from the report, specifically of a poll showing types of municipal support toward community land trust. Like municipality in helping acquiring land. He concluded with several resources on community land trust that are out there and are free.

Councilperson Niedzielski-Eichner started to open on discussion with the committee. She lead the first question about homeownership being an important piece to affordable housing goal of the City and committee. She wanted to discuss further about the equity piece and if a homeowner sells what does that mean.

Mr. Davis responded that it is up to the CLT to decide how equity would work within their particular program. He continued to give example of that in different in CLT's.

Councilperson Dunn, asked about how the tax part works outs.

Mr. Davis responded that the land is not taken off the taxes that every homeowner a part of a CLT pays taxes. However, the property taxes are incumbered and the taxes records would show this. Because the homeowner can only sell the home back to the land trust for a moderate affordable price.

Councilperson Dunn, gave an example for nonprofits their tax make up is very different as well.

Councilperson Niedzielski-Eichner clarified that basically the biggest difference it's a CLT would be taxed differently than a market rate property.

Mr. Davis agreed, that the property right that you give up are reflected in the property taxes.

Councilperson Dunn, stated that she just doesn't understand how the process would work with taxes in a joint venue between a nonprofit and a municipality.

Councilperson Lopez, asked how have municipal governments been successful with balancing the incumbered taxes and the amount of revenue they receive.

Mr. Davis said he often see these CLT's develop vacant land which end up being more profitable then being vacant property.

Councilperson Niedzielski-Eichner asked if Mr. Davis could talk about the types of nonprofits that tend to be the lead entity of running a CLT

Mr. Davis said he sees all sorts of modes like CLT's from scratch, habitat for humanities, churches, municipals governments, or a typical nonprofit.

Councilperson Young commented on the equity piece and maintaining affordability.

Mr. Davis said it really lies within the design of the program and the entities who are creating the CLT to wrestle with the resale formula they will use.

Councilperson Young as what would the AMI target be?

Mr. Davis said that would be up to the community to decide what the income brackets it would include. You would have to see who in the community are trying to serve.

Councilperson Niedzielski-Eichner stated how Norwalk is limited on vacant land in developing this kind of program. She asked if Mr. Davis could point us in the direction of a comparable city to Norwalk that has successfully done this.

Mr. Davis said yes most often successful land trust are building new on vacant land or using density where they can build a lot on a small lot. He said he could send a list of successful community land trusts. Also the people who create these CLT's are very open and giving of information to people who are asking.

Councilperson Dunn asked if at home small businesses ever a part of these projects or developments?

Mr. Davis responded saying it is restricted by the local zoning so if the underlying zoning allows for those businesses the CLT can allow for those businesses to be within the CLT if they so choose. But he sees a lot of both retail and affordable housing unit within many CLT in Burlington, Vermont.

Councilperson Young asked about senior housing and how have people used CLTs with senior housing.

Mr. Davis said that he has seen folks doing CLT's to help affordable elderly housing. Almost every type of housing from homeless shelters to daycare centers some CLT's has probably done it. And these entities are very generous with sharing what has worked or not worked for them.

Councilperson Niedzielski-Eichner thanked Mr. Davis for his presentation and attending tonight. This really helped the City kick off the conversation of CLT's and what potentially Norwalk could do. She said she would be following up with Mr. Davis with some model that are comparable to Norwalk.

Mr. Davis said it seems like Norwalk is already on a page with already have a nonprofit landscape within the City that most of these CLT's do not start from scratch but something the City can build on.

Councilperson Niedzielski-Eichner agreed there were a few mentioned tonight that would be great to see where partnerships could be made.

ADJOURNMENT

****COUNCILPERSON DUNN MADE MOTION TO ADJOURN**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Sincerely,
Michelle Andrzejewski