

**BRISTOL PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 23, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER:

By: Acting Chairman Soares

Time: 6:00 P.M.

Place: City Hall

ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS	NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT
REGULAR MEMBERS:	Chairman William Veits (Chairman)		X
	Commissioner John Soares (Vice Chairman and Acting Chairman)	X	
	Jeff Hayden	X	
	Jon Pose	X	
	Tracey Bacchus (Alternate)	X	
ALTERNATE MEMBERS:	Kenneth Rasmussen-Tuller	X	
	Christopher Nardi	X	
STAFF:	Robert Flanagan, AICP, City Planner	X	

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

There was no public participation.

NEW BUSINESS:**1. Review and Presentation of the DRAFT 2022 Affordable Housing Plan**

The Commission acknowledged receipt of the following item(s) in their electronic packets: a plan entitled "Bristol AH Plan – First Draft for Planning Commission, dated February 17, 2022, 2022-2027 Affordable Housing Plan, First Draft – 2/17/22 Planning Commission, prepared by Planimetrics."

Acting Chairman Soares explained this was a review of the Draft 2022 Affordable Housing Plan.

Glenn Chalder, Planning Consultant, and President of Planimetrics, 136 Simsbury Rd, Avon, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation with the Commission regarding the Draft 2022 Affordable Housing Plan. Mr. Chalder wanted their comments. In 2017 the Connecticut Legislature adopted an act for every municipality for every town in CT to have an affordable housing plan by June 1, 2022. The plans may not be more than 5 years old. This would increase affordable developments.

Mr. Chalder reviewed the following:

Section 2.1. Definition of Affordable Housing Development and Section 2.2. Existing Affordable Housing Developments in Bristol, He reviewed the definitions for assisted housing, affordable housing, deed restricted housing, set aside development and CHFA mortgages.

Section 2.3. Other Types of Affordable Housing in Bristol: the State updated the yearly housing report on Monday and Bristol's assisted housing was increased by 98 units, but there has been decreased rental assistance, and the housing totals went from 2,870 to 2,956 units.

2.4. Affordable Housing Needs in Bristol: About 60% to 80% met the housing stock, but there was a need for more affordable housing in Bristol. In 2016, the sub-prime mortgage crisis and recently with COVID-19 concerns, have made housing unaffordable and beyond a resident's income. Bristol has affordable housing, but it was not sufficient for the need.

2.5. The Bristol social service employees have decreased versus different towns, which makes it difficult to get resources. There are units available, but some people do not have access or an opportunity to get into this type of housing.

3.0 Synthesis, when the mortgage is paid off for these units, these units get lost because they then become market rate.

4.0 Housing Strategies, there is some animosity towards the issues of affordable housing; this could be overcome by education about how a diverse housing stock makes Bristol a better place.

4.4. Regulations that may be revised to improve the opportunities for affordable housing. He recommends that the Commissions review the report because the Zoning Commission is currently revising their Regulations.

4.5. Enhance Supportive Housing-Related Services, the social services have been blended into different departments and most Staff were in the Parks and Recreation Department, which are not focused on social services.

5.1. Some Key Housing Terms, the mortgage interest rates were a constantly varying. He suggested adding a link to the CDBG block grant program.

Mr. Chalder summarized Bristol was exempt from the Affordable Housing 8-30g law, because Bristol has met the goal of 10% affordable housing. There are a number of units, but there is a need for more units.

Commission inquiries: Mr. Chalder explained the challenge was getting the right people into the right units and to provide more social services. There are different difficulties for tenants and for landlords, but to try to get them to work better together. The concern with these is affordability.

Mr. Flanagan inquiries: Mr. Chalder explained for the percentage for the Regional Housing Profile was a report that was more directed at the towns that were suburban communities, but Bristol was already doing a lot of things the State had suggested.

Dr. Dawn Ledger, Phd., Economic and Community Development, City of Bristol, 111 North Main St., explained she submitted comments to Mr. Chalder previously. She reiterated the City spends a lot of money on the CDBG program for housing programs, which was set up to improve older housing stock. The City of Bristol has a large amount of older housing stock they want to retain, improve and keep safe. The more they support this housing, the better it is for all.

Previously the concerns were with the elderly residents keeping their homes in good order, but recently the concerns are with young families and lead paint problems. This year \$300,000 would be spent to retain the viable older housing stock. There were only two City employees working on these concerns. There was less money, fewer resources. They have to report yearly to HUD. They participate in the Mayor's taskforce and various organizations and try to improve housing for everyone in Bristol.

Commission inquiries: Ms. Ledger explained the suspension of the eviction moratorium has had an effect as there are now a lot of former tenants in the shelters. A lot of landlords are keeping units vacant because they do not want to rent to people with previous evictions. Therefore, a lot of people cannot find anywhere to live and that has been increasing in the last month. Most communities are downsizing their employees including her department.

2. NEXT STEPS:

Mr. Chalder would like to review this plan with different agencies and ask for comments. He reiterated the plan has to be adopted by June 1, 2022, but he wanted to do that at the Planning Commission May 23, 2022 meeting. In April they have to advertise the Public Hearing notice. Next month, March 23rd, he will provide the various comments to the Commission and revise the plan and go forward to the public hearing in May for adoption.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion was made by Commissioner Hayden to adjourn.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Pose.

Motion carried 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 6:53 P.M.

These minutes represent the proceedings of the meeting.

This meeting was taped.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy King

John Soares
Acting Chair/Vice Chairman
City Planning Commission