

**Minutes of the PLANNING AND ZONING POCD SUBCOMMITTEE**  
**Held Tuesday, October 20, 2020 AT 7:15 P.M.**

- A. **Call to Order** was at 7:15 pm.
- B. **Roll Call:** J. Castignoli, J. Kader, P. Kearney, J. Mortimer, J. Quish; S. Marlow (IWA liaison); D. Sulkis, M. Greene (staff)
- C. Topics for discussion:

*a. Assessors response to the application of PA-490 for properties within Milford.*

**Mr. Sulkis** provided information on the question of what qualifies as farmland and thus is eligible for a tax abatement. Assessor Marcus Irrek provided language from the state statute enacted by the Board of Aldermen. The statute provides for changes to a property's assessment based on the use and amount of land. He cited an example Mr. Irrek gave of a homeowner with a garden who asked for application of the statute only to discover that the change would be minimal. The assessor has discretion about the percentage of land being farmed. Discussion ensued about how the regulation's definition of farming requires minimum acreage and what would happen if landowners sold their land to a developer. **Mr. Sulkis** said if property was sold, the underlying zoning regulations still apply; for example, the DO zone—the location of a farm being used as an example—provides for truck farms, with no houses permitted. The group discussed the idea that almost any property could be construed as a farm based on PA 490 with size less important. The group talked about examples of farming uses that involve small areas, such as beehives. **Chairman Quish** wanted to consider putting language in POCD to encourage small farms. **Mr. Marlow** wondered about how to establish that the farm was a bona fide commercial activity that generates income and whether such a requirement must be tied in. **Mr. Sulkis** said that the assessor's criteria could be helpful because they do not impose a size restriction on bona fide farms. **Ms. Kearney** offered to research the topic and suggest some language.

*b. Housing trends and recommendations from the Milford 5-year Strategic Housing Plan.*

**Chairman Quish** requested that **Mr. Sulkis** provide an overview of City's 5-year Housing Plan. **Mr. Sulkis** said the Community Development Office's Fair Housing Officer is required by the state to produce such a plan and that it is usually written by a consultant. He said that goals are stated in that Housing Plan and that the board can use the POCD to help decide how to incorporate movement toward meeting them. He said the overriding goal is to create decent, accessible, stable housing environments for the citizens of the City. He noted that the City of Milford, unlike some other municipalities, is not in housing construction business, but rather it can facilitate or incentivize the expansion and diversity of the City's housing stock. Evictions and homelessness reduction were discussed and the ways in which different housing types could be less expensive such that an economically fragile citizens are supported. He said that as a land use board, Planning and Zoning can facilitate different housing types, for example, tiny houses are being used in some areas as a solution to support chronically homeless people. In addition, overall real estate market analysis shows a demand for rental housing that people can afford; **Mr. Sulkis** said this topic frequently comes up at planning conferences he has attended. He said analysis of current demographics reveal that people leaving college are mobile and want to rent, often because they have substantial educational debt. In addition, "empty-nesters" want to downsize, creating demand for similar types of housing. **Mr. Kader** said high-end housing tends to be what is constructed, but lower income people have needs, too. The concept of backlash and "NIMBY" (not in my backyard) were discussed. **Mr. Mortimer** pointed out that in Milford, smaller scale multifamily homes for 2 and 3 families are scarce. **Ms. Kearney** noted that the recently approved plan for 135 Broad Street conforms to Transit-Oriented Development goals. **Mr. Kader** and **Chairman Quish** discussed how difficult it is to balance need for diverse housing with bias against affordable housing in the community. **Mr. Marlow** said that balance is the key, to ensure that Milford grows without changing its essential character. **Mr. Mortimer** reflected on the need to meet affordable housing percentages to support the 8-30g moratorium. The group discussed that City must use the moratorium to decide where to locate affordable housing and craft regulations to guide developers on where to build it rather than the other way around. There was acknowledgement that a lot would be needed to reach the 10% state target and that the Planning and Zoning Board has tools to provide guidance, such as requiring that any 10+-unit-development must include an affordable component or pay into a fund that allows the city to build affordable housing. There was agreement that the board must act in partnership with the rest of City leadership for appropriate development.

**Tiny homes**

This topic was held for a later date.

- D. Approval of Minutes of 7-21-20 was unanimous.
- E. Member suggestions-none.
- F. Adjournment 8:33.