



Housing/Community Development/Social Services Committee - Board of Representatives

Gloria DePina, Chair

Lila Wallace, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Monday, October 21, 2019
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Place: Democratic Caucus Room, 4th Floor, Government Center, 888
Washington Boulevard

The Housing/Community Development/Social Services Committee met at the above time and place. In attendance were Chair DePina, Vice Chair Wallace and Committee Member Reps. Michelson and Moore. Absent or excused were Reps. Pratt, Roqueta and Saftic. Also present was Ralph Blessing, Land Use Bureau Chief, and about 25 members of the public. See the attached [public hearing sign in sheet](#).

Chair DePina called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
1. HCD30.016	ORDINANCE <u>for public hearing and final adoption</u> ; Providing for the Creation of an Affordable Housing Trust Fund in the City of Stamford. 01/05/19 – Submitted by Ralph Blessing, Land Use Bureau Chief 01/30/19 –Held in Committee 8-0-0 02/11/19 – Moved to Pending 09/16/19 – Approved by Committee 5-0-0	Approved, as amended, 3-0-1

Chair DePina opened the public hearing.

Gavin spoke about difficulties he had finding affordable housing

Carolyn Cropper stated that she wanted to understand how the 10% set aside works and that the income guidelines for the BMR housing are too high

Chair DePina asked Mr. Blessing to explain the ordinance prior to the continuation of the public hearing.

Mr. Blessing explained the current BMR program: A developer must set aside 10% of the units being developed at 50% of the AMI or may be able to make a fee-in-lieu payment instead. Under the current program, the funds would go directly to developers of affordable housing. The proposed ordinance would put the funds into a bucket, and the trust fund board would decide where the funds would go. This is part of a larger program which includes a study of the City's affordable housing needs every five years

and better management and increased oversight of the BMR program. The trust fund is one of several things the City is trying to do to make affordable housing more accessible.

Regine Thadel discussed her difficulty in getting information about BMR units.

Cynthia Lewis discussed her difficulty as a resident of a BMR unit.

The Reverend Tommie Jackson distributed the attached article and read the [attached statement](#) into the record regarding the composition of the Trust Fund Board

Richard Freedman, the Chair of the Board of Finance and a for-profit and not-for-profit developer, stated that the City needs a mechanism for lower income units to be built; the proposed trust fund is a good mechanism for the disbursement of the fee-in-lieu funds; increasing the Board to include more expertise and a community member would be a good idea.

Monique spoke in support of the Board looking at housing for different levels of income

Nydia Brown of Neighborhood Housing spoke about the need for more financing for affordable housing

Mr. Blessing addressed questions raised by members of the public:

- The Housing Trust Board will decide where the funds will go; there will be ongoing applications to provide funds for affordable housing providers
- Once a certain threshold is met, the Board would issue an RFP to address specific housing issues and then select the best proposal
- All meetings would be open to the public
- The goals are transparency and doing the most with scarce resources – to have as many affordable housing units as possible
- A future plan is to have one place for all applications in the future

James Healy, the President of New Neighborhoods stated that the problems a non-profit developer has include finding land to develop and finding a source of funding, since they are competing with for-profit entities. The fund should give extra weight to applications from non-profits and the qualifications should line up with the tax credit, HUD and HOME rules

Chair DePina closed the public hearing at 7:05 p.m.

The committee then discussed the proposed ordinance with Mr. Blessing:

- The possibility of increasing the size of the Board to include members of the not-for-profit housing community was discussed. Concerns were expressed about a potential conflict of interest since these entities might apply for funds.
- The wording of the §146-71 could permit 2 members of the Board to approve an action, if only 3 people are required for a quorum.
- Would there be a way to include a public advisory committee or someone who is not in housing development or someone who lives in affordable housing?
- It is difficult to get members of the public to serve on committees
- There would be a public hearing prior the approval of any funds being disbursed
- The Land Use Bureau Chief does not work for the Zoning Board chair, although the Land Use Bureau provides support to the Zoning Board

A motion to amend §146-71.B to delete the words “of a quorum” was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 4-0-0 (Reps. DePina, Wallace, Michelson and Moore in favor).

A motion to increase the size of the Board to 7 people was made and did not receive a second.

A motion to amend §146-66 to change the definition of Affordable Housing to provide “where such income is less than or equal to **80% of** the area median income....” was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 4-0-0 (Reps. DePina, Wallace, Michelson and Moore in favor).

A motion to amend §146-67.A to change the title to “*Generation and calculation of commercial linkage fees for inclusion in ~~Stamford Housing Development Fund~~ **Stamford Affordable Housing Trust Fund**” was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 4-0-0 (Reps. DePina, Wallace, Michelson and Moore in favor).*

A motion to amend §146-74.B to change the word “detail” to “be” was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 4-0-0 (Reps. DePina, Wallace, Michelson and Moore in favor).

A motion to approve the ordinance for final adoption, as amended, was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 3-0-1 (Reps. DePina, Wallace and Michelson in favor; Rep. Moore abstaining).

2. HCD30.021 REVIEW; Consequences of Unexpended CDBG **HELD**
 Funds.
 10/03/19 – Submitted by Rep. DePina

Item 2 was held due to the unavailability of the invited guest.

Chair DePina adjourned the meeting at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Gloria DePina, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).