



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

Mavina Moore, Co-Chair

Rob Roqueta, Co-Chair

Committee Report

Date: Tuesday, September 26, 2023
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Place: *This meeting was held remotely*

The Housing/Community Development/Social Service Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Co-Chairs Moore and Roqueta and Committee Member Reps. Campbell, Ley, Pollack, Walston, and Dakary Watkins. Also present were Reps. Adams, Berns, Boeger, Figueroa, Garst, Matheny, Pavia, Sherwood, and Stella; Ralph Blessing, Land Use Bureau Chief; and Emily Gordon, Affordable Housing Manager.

Co-Chair Roqueta called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
1. HCD31.043	REVIEW; How Many Affordable Housing Units has Stamford Gained in the last 5 Years through New Development and How Many New Developments have used Fee-in-Lieu. 08/09/23 – Submitted by Reps. Figueroa, Stella, and Campbell	Report Made

Mr. Blessing reviewed the [attached memo](#) with the Committee members. Committee member discussed Item No. 1 with the invited guests. Items discussed included the following:

- Information on the individual owners of the properties listed in the memo is available in the assessor's database, and will be provided
- 660 affordable unites have been developed since 2015; there are 1200 total units in the City
- The City website has a map of below market rental units in the City at <https://www.stamfordct.gov/government/operations/land-use-bureau-planning-zoning-zoning-enforcement/community-development/below-market-rate-dwelling-units>
- Units are primarily in the downtown area or south end; the map does not include properties managed by non-profits
- Generally, 10% of the units are required to be BMR; in some districts it is 12%
- Charter Oak developments are generally 60% affordable
- Fee in lieu money that is not spent goes back to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund; currently the trust fund has just over \$3 million, \$1.7 million of which is unallocated
- The BMR program is managed by the Zoning Board
- There are 2 projects that have received special permits from the Zoning Board to

- to use FIL as the alternative for the below market rate requirement \$2.3 will be received from Seaview and \$10.7 million from 3 Landmark
- FIL money must be paid to the city prior to a developer receiving a building permit
 - This money goes into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which allocates it to projects, such as supportive housing at 36 Ann Street, homeownership at 95 Elmcroft, or 100% affordable projects
 - 80% of the developments in the last 15 years have provided on-site affordable housing
 - Would 100% on site be preferable?
 - BMR was not intended as deeply affordable housing, but was intended as workforce housing
 - If units are provided at affordability levels below 50%, fewer units need to be provided
 - On site BMR programs don't generally produce larger units or senior housing units; the FIL program can be used to produce units that the market rate program does not produce
 - Residents at 30% AMI typically need more supportive housing; and these services are not typically available in BMR buildings
 - Deeply affordable housing is typically provided by non-profits and other housing mechanisms rather than through BMR
 - Any FIL payment must be approved by the Zoning Board; historically, the Zoning Board has been in favor of onsite BMR
 - The BMR requirements only apply to buildings with 10 or more units
 - 50% AMI is not really affordable
 - There is a housing shortage throughout the country
 - The City does not build housing or place people in housing
 - The criteria the Zoning Board uses in evaluating FIL is whether it will provide more or better units than would be provided onsite
 - Seaview is paying a relatively big FIL for only 5 units because of the size of the units.
 - The \$10.3 million from 3 Landmark can be leveraged into many more and larger units; it could generate \$40 million to be used for affordable housing construction
 - There is more demand for FIL funds from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund than there are funds
 - Increasing the BMR percentage might increase the housing supply, but might also discourage developers from developing market rate housing in Stamford
 - The FIL funds are ways to get funding from other sources for housing
 - There are currently 500 on site units in the pipeline and 45 FIL units
 - The BMR program is one of the most successful inclusionary housing programs in the Country
 - Market rates in Stamford are high because there isn't enough housing; New Rochelle has built a lot of housing, and while rents in the country rents went up 30%, New Rochelle rents went up 7%; the key to solving the housing crisis is to build more housing
 - The BMR Rate is 50% AMI, but people can pay less through vouchers, which is a federal program
 - The BMR program is only one component of affordable housing
 - If people need to find housing, they should work through the Social Services Department, the State 211 program, etc. The Land Use Bureau does not provide housing

- The City's [Housing Affordability Plan](#) details some of the City's plans to meet the housing needs of the community
- There are currently 15,000 rental units of housing in Stamford paying more than they can afford for housing
- The housing crisis goes from people having no place to sleep to not being able to afford the housing in which they live

Co-Chair Roqueta adjourned the meeting at 9:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rob Roqueta, Co-Chair

This meeting is on [video](#)