

Quality of Life committee, March 3, 2023

PRESENT: Tistrya Houghtling, Sharon Powers, Josh Young, Marianna Anthonisen

Viewing via Live Stream: Danielle Kuffel, Kyle Kuffel

Guest: Chris Brown, CEDC Housing Development Coordinator

Absent: Bob Gilson

Meeting called to order: 9:35am

Tistrya Houghtling appointed Sharon Powers to take minutes for today, in Bob Gilson's absence.

Presentation by Chris Brown, Columbia County Housing Development Coordinator for the Columbia Economic Development Corporation (CEDC)

Presentation was recorded and is available for anyone to see via Live Streams – accessed from the Town of New Lebanon website – it was recommended that people watch that for the full presentation, while the following is a brief recap of some of the points.

Chris Brown gave a brief synopsis of his background in housing and then segued into what the CEDC has done regarding affordable housing. They have several goals which include supporting small, incremental developments in housing, improving existing housing stock, increasing home ownership opportunities, and raising awareness and educating the community on the need for a wide array of options in housing. They want to create a county infrastructure master plan to assess what now exists

He spoke about Community Land Trusts (CLT) where the CLT owns the land, but sells the home on the land to homeowners who don't own the land. The homes are sold at a subsidized rate and there is a resale formula built in if the house is sold so it can never be sold at current market value. For example, a home that might be worth \$300K at full market value is sold for \$120,000. The homeowner can then sell the home for not more than a percentage over that \$120,000, i.e. \$140,000, so it stays an affordable home. Some of the sale usually goes back to the CLT if they sell it (i.e. half).

CLT's are usually made up of 9 people: 3 experts on homes and land trusts, 3 members of the community, and 3 who live on land trust property.

Right now, Columbia County is thinking of forming a CLT – this would encompass all the Towns in Columbia County and have greater power than having multiple CLTs within the county.

ADU's are the easiest way to add affordable housing, but they come with risks that the ADU's would become short-term rentals and not help the long-term market.

Some CLT's give people the option of having an ADU rental on the property to make back some of their investment.

CLT's take land out of the private market and CLT houses should never be assessed at market value.

Types of property best for new development: repurposed buildings, not new, with walkability to town. Grades of the land must be taken into account as should watersheds.

Tistrya Houghtling asked about the Town's role in all this – the funding is from the developer. What is needed is land that is available.

Some CLT's usually are formed within an existing organization.
Zoning bylaw amendments might be needed to allow them in towns.

Different model – we identify a parcel, attract a developer.

Low Income Housing Tax Credits – difficult to assemble parcels in rural areas that are contiguous, so they sometimes allow for “scatter sites” – where one developer can develop separate parcels that are not contiguous.

CBA – Community Benefits Agreements – between concerned citizens and developer – a group of citizens goes to a developer with a list of requests and asks for concessions, once gotten, the CBA then fully supports the project. The developer incorporates the feedback – this is a more proactive version of getting things done – brings developers and communities together. Some possible asks: fix sidewalks, create a community center, gardens, street scaping.

Would there be an issue with schools if there are a lot of CLTs since CLTs bring in younger families, but with reduced price of homes, there is a reduced school tax – should that be part of a CBA – to ask for the developer to contribute to the schools so the schools do not lose revenues.

For development – need a site that you have control over before housing development – sometimes best done through a non-profit.

Kathy Hochul has put forth a goal of having each town's housing stock rise by 1% a year – in New Lebanon that would be 13 units a year. The New York Housing Compact.

HCR website is a helpful place to find Affordable Housing grants and other opportunities. Home and Community Renewal: <https://hcr.ny.gov>

Chris Brown will send Tistrya Houghtling a list of available grants coming up. Will also send spreadsheets on New Lebanon statistics regarding housing and other information that we would need for grants and attracting developers.

Meeting adjourned at 10:52 by Tistrya Houghtling, seconded by Josh Young.

Next meeting: March 31, 2023 at 9:30 am

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Powers
Minutes taker in absence of Bob Gilson