



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

Gloria DePina, Chair

Lila Wallace, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Monday, November 18, 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, Moore, Pratt and Roqueta. Also present were Reps. Adams, Cottrell, McMullen, Morson, Sherwood and Stella; Ellen Bromley, Social Services Director; Ralph Blessing, Land Use Bureau Chief; and Tara Petrocelli, Community Development Office.

Chair DePina called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
1. HCD30.023	REVIEW and APPROVAL; Year 46 CDBG Budgeting Schedule. 11/07/19 – Submitted by Tara Petrocelli	Approved 4-0-0
A motion to approve Item No. 1 was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 4-0-0 (Reps. DePina, Wallace, Pratt and Roqueta in favor).		
2. HCD30.016	ORDINANCE <u>for 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 10/21/19 – Public Hearing Held and Approved by Committee, as amended 3-0-1 11/06/19 – Held by Full Board 31-0-0	Held, as amended, 4-2-0

Mr. Blessing explained the proposed ordinance:

- The City currently does not have a receptacle for Fee-in-Lieu funds. The Zoning Board determines who receives fee-in-lieu funds, using the standard that the fee-in-lieu funds will leverage more affordable housing than if the housing were provided on-site. Under the proposed ordinance, the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) Board would decide where the funds would go. There would be a rolling process for

the smaller amounts and an RFP process for larger amounts.

- This ordinance does not address the BMR rates or how the BMR program is administered. This is just for managing the fee-in-lieu funds and broadening the people involved in that process.
- The ordinance creates a requirement for an affordable housing study to be conducted every 5 years by either an outside consultant or the City which will provide guidelines for how the fee-in-lieu funds will be spent. The study will provide the AHTF Board with the facts to make decisions for the use of the funds
- He expects that much of the work of the AHTF will be done by the Land Use Bureau staff
- He suggests that if the LU Bureau Chief is not a member, that a member be appointed by the Mayor with qualifications in affordable housing finance or law
- The idea of the board is a group of experts who are not making policy decisions but will allocate the fee-in-lieu funds based on policies created by the Board of Representatives, the Zoning Board and the Planning Board

Ms. Bromley suggested that the Board might also contain a member of upper management from HUD, the DECD or a neighboring housing authority (e.g. Norwalk, Greenwich); local lending institutions or the Stamford Community Development Director. – someone with enough expertise in the field to understand the complexities and difficulties in building affordable housing.

Committee members discussed the proposed ordinance and possible changes to the proposed ordinance with the invited guests as follows:

- Currently the decisions re fee-in-lieu funds are made by the Zoning Board
- For funds of up to \$100,000, the Board would an application process and would make decisions at public meetings every few months
- The \$3 million for the RFP process is because that is a number the City seems to get often
- Only a certain percentage of the \$100,000 would be expended in order to permit the building of a nest egg
- The AHTF Board will probably know of larger projects coming down the pipe and reserve funds for them
- The ordinance should be amended to provide that there be 2 people on the Board who have experience with affordable housing by either being residents or managers
- HUD funding has strings attached and may not be able to be included in this fund
- There is no change in the ordinance about linkage fees except where the fees go
- Under State law, the Zoning Board gets to decide whether or not to accept fee-in-lieu funds – the alternative means of compliance must be superior to what is being replaced – only how the fee-in-lieu funds are spent can be taken away from the Zoning Board
- Restrictions on how the property is used would remain with the property
- The AHTF Board should be able to understand housing finance
- The ordinance should be amended to provide that the Board of Representatives must approve all of the AHTF Board allocations
- The ordinance should be amended to add community members
- The ordinance should be amended to include 2 members of the Board of Representatives, one from each party
- The ordinance should be amended to include someone who lives in BMR housing or oversees BMR housing
- Maybe Land Use Committee members should be involved in the Board, since it

also presents land use issues

- Since the fee-in-lieu application is a special exception, the ordinance should be amended to require a public hearing on how the money is spent; this ordinance removes the public comments now made at the Zoning Board on how the money is spent
- The mechanism for creating criteria for the distribution of funds is based in the Affordable Housing study
- There is a typographical error (an extra word) in the first sentence of §146-74.C
- The report in §146-75 should go to the Town Clerk as well
- The ordinance should be amended to require approval/disapproval of every allocation by the Board of Representative to make the process more accountable and transparent
- Would adding representatives of the Board of Representatives to the Board make the Board subject to the minority representation rules?
- The ordinance should be amended to require a public hearing for allocations of more than \$3 million
- The ordinance should be amended to include more than 5 members from the HCD/SS Committee
- Having members come from the HCD/SS Committee would overburden members of the committee – have the President appoint 2 members
- Would board members serving on the AHTF Board be able to vote if an approval then came before the Board of Representatives?
- The allocation should go before the Board of Finance and the Board of Representatives
- If all of the decisions are going before the Board of Finance and the Board of Representatives, there is no need for the AHTF Board, because the affordable housing plan is no longer guiding the decisions
- The decisions should be made by the HCD/SS Committee; this would be a lot of work for the committee, to review and analyze the applications

A motion to amend the ordinance to increase the number of members of the Board to 7, without a recommendation as to who the other 2 members should be, was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 5-0-1 (Reps. DePina, Wallace, Moore, Pratt and Roqueta in favor; Rep. Michelson abstaining).

A motion to hold the ordinance was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 4-2-0 (Reps. Wallace, Moore, Pratt, and Roqueta in favor; Reps. DePina and Michelson opposed).

Chair DePina adjourned the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

This meeting is on [video](#).