



Community Planning Council

The Community Planning Council was established by Greenwich United Way to encourage the most effective and efficient health and human service delivery system for Greenwich. Comprised of community leaders, nonprofit service professionals, Greenwich United Way board members, and community volunteers, the work of the Planning Council, particularly through its periodic Needs Assessments, has led to the development of some of the Town's most valued programs and institutions.

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Community Planning Council Meeting Thursday, 11/17, 9am, Affordable Housing in Greenwich

Speakers:

Bob Barolak – Chair, Greenwich Affordable Housing Trust Fund
Patrick LaRow – Deputy Director/Assistant Town Planner, Town of Greenwich

According to the Greenwich United Way's 2020 Needs Assessment, the housing affordability challenge is a complex problem. Many people who want to live in Greenwich do not have the financial resources to qualify for a mortgage or cannot afford a high-cost rental. Of those who do live in Greenwich, many spend a significant amount of their income on housing costs. The problem of the housing burden is particularly acute in the relatively low-income neighborhoods

Highlights from the Presentation:

The presentation covered various topics around affordable housing in Greenwich.

Mr. LaRow provided an overview of his role and Planning and Zoning (P&Z). The Planning and Zoning Commission is a regulatory body composed of five regular members and three alternates who are appointed by the Representative Town Meeting and nominated by the Board of Selectmen.

He briefly described the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). The Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is a land use plan that functions as an organizing document that informs the public and town departments in the preparation of detailed master plans and technical reports that are focused on individual facilities, geographic areas, or specific infrastructure projects. The role of the Plan of Conservation and Development is not to supersede the established master planning practice, but rather to establish land use policies to guide individual projects and studies, as well as to better coordinate and prioritize future projects or improvements.

Mr. Barolak and Larow provided an overview on what affordable housing is and 8-30g. 8-30g is a Connecticut state law that applies to any municipality which, like Greenwich, has less than 10% of its housing units classified as affordable.

- The law seeks to encourage the development of more affordable housing units by allowing developers to disregard building size, setback and other zoning rules in new developments in which at least 30% of the units are set-aside as affordable. Greenwich has recently seen a number of projects proposed and under development using this rule.
- Developers rely on the statute to build more market rate units to offset the profit lost from providing the 30% affordable.
- Allowing developers to build with greatly reduced local control complicates town planning decisions and can impose considerable stress on municipal resources.
- Mr. Barolak provided an update on the role and formation of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The trust will provide financial support for developers who are willing to work with the Town in one of two ways:
 - reduce the size or revise other features of a proposed development to align better with local zoning and the existing scale of neighborhoods; or

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- devote a greater percentage of the buildings they construct to moderate income tenants and thereby help the town more quickly obtain permanent relief from 8-30g.
- The trust will also seek to subsidize the enhancements of or creation of affordability in existing buildings.
- Where possible, the trust will work to widen geographical distribution of affordable housing.

For more information on Greenwich P&Z and affordable housing please use this link:

<https://www.greenwichct.gov/428/Planning-Zoning>

For more information on the Affordable Housing Trust Fund please use this link:

<https://www.greenwichct.gov/2255/Affordable-Housing-Trust-Fund-Board#:~:text=The%20Greenwich%20Affordable%20Housing%20Trust,not%20to%20overburden%20local%20infrastructure.>

Next Community Planning Council Meeting:

Thursday, 12/8/22, 8:00am, Legislative Breakfast