

ALTERNATIVE HOUSING COMMITTEE
TOWN OFFICE BUILDING
TOWN OF KILLINGWORTH
323 ROUTE 81
KILLINGWORTH, CT 06419

MINUTES
Virtual Meeting
March 17, 2021

Tom Hogarty called the Virtual Meeting of the Alternative Housing Committee of the Town of Killingworth to order at 6:47 pm.

Members present: Secretary, Jeff Brewer, Tom Hogarty, Denis Jakuc, Michelle Knockwood, and New Member, Laurel Poletti.

Also present were Elizabeth Disbrow, Town of Killingworth, Guest Speaker Sam Gold, Executive Director, RiverCOG, Kevin Armstrong, RiverCOG GIS Planner, and Special Guest Sandy Allard.

Of major importance affecting all discussions during the meeting were the Selectman's approval of RiverCOG to lead development of the Town's plan and wrap it into their 13-Town Regional Plan and Planning & Zoning's adoption of sweeping changes to the Town's regulations for accessory dwellings.

The first part of the meeting consisted of a long discussion on land suitable for building in Killingworth and what types of building is possible on the parcels identified. Mr. Gold presented a series of maps which cover many aspects of Killingworth land including, but not limited to designated open space, soil drainage types and their septic suitability, transportation corridors, topography, water courses, wetlands and zoning. On request, Mr. Gold will provide copies that can be re-sized for use in looking for land suitable for building in Killingworth. Topography was a key discussion point with a maximum of 7 degrees, 12% slope as a maximum suitable for building. On request of the Committee, Mr. Gold volunteered that Kevin Armstrong would do a search for buildable land in Killingworth and present that information to the Committee when it is available. Mr. Gold made a point later in the meeting that this information will give the Town a "leg-up" on completing its 830J housing plan.

The Town will be asked by RiverCOG to appoint a point person to coordinate the Town's interface with the Regional Plan staff and consultants developing the plan. Mr. Gold noted that he believes that RiverCOG has sufficient internal funding for plan development so that the Towns will not have to ante up money to pay for their part of the plan. He also said that RiverCOG had selected two firms with different strengths to work together as a team on the project. They agreed. He then asked if we could wait for a major push on the Killingworth plan until after RiverCOG's Regional Plan Commission's report is complete. A plan draft is due to be presented in mid-April and the final report is due for presentation in mid-July.

The second part of the meeting focused on the Legislature and current legislative proposals to change State mandated zoning and other rules governing what can and should get built where within the State regardless of local input and interest.

One piece of proposed legislation of key concern is bill 1024 which allows multi-family housing to be built by right along major roadways in communities of 7,500+ persons. This proposed legislation also does away with legal non-conforming use. There is a question of property rights.

The other piece of proposed legislation is bill 6611 which focuses on housing for people at 30% or under the median income. This bill proposes the building of 140,000 new units across the State and mandates that the housing being built be built outside of the poorest census tracts in the State. One possible effect of the mandate could be to scatter the poor across the State in places where they cannot easily reach jobs. Transportation costs and public transportation availability are of major concern.

The third part of the meeting focused on development of a succinct 10-question survey of the people of Killingworth, so we know what they are thinking about housing needs in Killingworth for all variations of people who live here now and want to stay here despite affordability issues. Young people raised here who want to stay in Killingworth to work are one group. Other groups include local professionals who contribute directly to the community (fire fighters, police, road maintenance people, school bus drivers, teachers etc.) and older residents who must downsize either because of lack of retirement income or medical problems that cause a need for easier to access housing.

Tom Hogarty emphasized the questionnaire should be short and to the point, perhaps ten questions. Dennis Jakuc volunteered to coordinate collection and organization of the questionnaire. Sandy Allard volunteered to help. And Mr. Gold volunteered RiverCOG staff members with questionnaire and polling experience including the use of their SurveyMonkey account to help make it happen.

A key concern of the group is asking the right questions to elicit the information the Committee needs answers for to develop a plan suitable for Killingworth. In survey research, a normal way to get a useful survey is to develop a draft and try it out on 25 – 50 participants. Summarize the findings and refine the survey questions appropriately. Often a second test survey is required to get a good set of questions for the purpose.

At 9:00 pm, Tom Hogarty asked for motion to adjourn. The motion was made and seconded. All those present voted to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey H. Brewer, Secretary