

**City of Torrington**  
**Housing Plan Steering Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**December 14, 2021**

Meeting held via Zoom

Present: Jocelyn Ayer, Community and Economic Development Director,  
Northwest Connecticut Council of Governments (NWCOG)  
Martin Connor, Torrington City Planner  
Jeremy Leifert, Torrington Asst. City Planner  
Claudia Sweeney, Director, Torrington Housing Authority  
Starley Arias, Torrington Planning and Zoning Commissioner  
Sharon Waagner, Torrington City Councilor

Not Present: Rista Malanca, Torrington Economic Development Director

Ms. Ayer called the meeting to order via Zoom at 4:00 p.m.

Motion by Mr. Arias to accept the September 28, 2021 minutes, seconded by Ms. Waagner, unanimously carried.

**1) Discuss resident housing needs survey responses to date**  
**Discuss best ways to get as many residents to take the survey as possible**

Ms. Ayer said twenty people thus far have taken the survey, and higher numbers are needed. She has spoken with Rista Malanca about translating the survey into Spanish, so both versions will be available, and then Ms. Malanca will place both versions on the City's website. Ms. Malanca will put the survey into the December newsletter she distributes as part of the Economic Development Office.

Ms. Waagner inquired if the Board of Education would send out the survey, and Ms. Ayer responded she will send out survey documents to Committee members. Mr. Leifert noted Ms. Malanca can send the survey to Mayor Carbone for distribution.

Ms. Ayer stated a press release should also be sent out, Ms. Waagner added Emily Olson at the Register Citizen newspaper may do an article on the survey as well, and Ms. Waagner will send a copy of the survey to Ms. Olson, and also Bruno at the Republican American newspaper. Ms. Ayer will reach out to Maria Gonzalez at New Opportunities and Ms. Waagner will send to her contacts as well.

Mr. Arias will share the survey with these contacts at United Way. He noted Ms. Gonzalez would be helpful to have at these meetings as well. Ms. Ayer will invite Ms. Gonzalez to a future meeting of this Committee. Ms. Waagner will send the survey to the Torrington Library for distribution, and JoAnn Ryan of the Chamber of Commerce should be contacted as well. Ms. Ayer noted the Chamber of Commerce should get the worker survey, as commuter questions are included in that survey.

Ms. Ayer noted Ms. Malanca has volunteered to send an email to local businesses, and Mr. Leifert will review this with Ms. Malanca if she doesn't sign onto tonight's meeting.

Ms. Ayer will send Committee members links to surveys, and inform members which groups and distribution lists have received the survey.

## **2) Discuss worker/employer survey about housing needs**

Ms. Ayer screen shared the survey "Employee Housing Needs Survey". Questions on the survey were reviewed by Committee members. Ms. Ayer will add questions regarding gross income. Ms. Waagner suggested adding manufacturing to the list of employment types. Night shift work was noted. Ms. Sweeney inquired if the survey would be sent to employers such as Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, Ms. Ayer noted Ms. Malanca will take care of this distribution.

Mr. Arias inquired if a QR code could be obtained, and Ms. Ayer noted Ms. Malanca has talked about including such a code on the posters. Mr. Arias said an informational poster would be beneficial at New Opportunites, as there is much foot traffic at this location, and banks would also be a good place for a survey poster. Ms. Waagner stated a poster would be beneficial at the Torrington Library as well.

## **3) Next steps and next meeting date (January 25, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.)**

Ms. Ayer said January 25, 2022 is the next meeting, and hopefully we will have many responses at that time. We should plan for community meeting and planning some time in February, perhaps through Zoom. This would be to inform residents of their progress, plans and next steps.

Mr. Arias is looking for consistency, so all Committee members are distributing the same information, and small size bites are better for social media. Ms. Ayer will send out her draft for social media posting.

Ms. Ayer stated other towns have invited their school superintendents to share their views, as well as realtors. She is looking for suggestions for guest speakers. Perhaps Ms. Sweeney can give an overview of what the Housing Authority manages, and what needs are there. Ms. Sweeney stated this needs to not be one-sided, and not to push one idea or item onto the public, but to ask for their opinions and invite a variety of speakers, so it's not just this Committee presenting their plans.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.