

Town of Sullivan, NH
Housing Task Force
Meeting Minutes, December 14, 2023
Sullivan Town Hall/Planning Office (Lower Level)

Members present: Leslie Casey (chair), Wendy Pelletier, Gaynelle Pratt, Brad Smith

Absent: Paul Bolduc (Selectman)

Planning Consultant: Ivy Vann AICP, CNU-A

Public present: C. Christopher Pratt (Sullivan Planning Board Chair)

- A. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 2:00 PM. A quorum was present.
- B. Ordinance Amendment, Accessory Dwelling Units:** A draft proposed amendment to the ADU ordinance prepared by the Housing Task Force (attached) was the subject of a Planning Board hearing held on December 6th. Ivy Vann introduced the proposed amendment to the Board and members of the public in attendance at that meeting. After hearing public testimony and deliberating, the Planning Board sent the draft ADU amendment back to the Housing Task Force for revision. The Planning Board had voted to request revisions to (1) the draft amendment to Article IV.H.2, clarifying that only one detached ADU is permitted per principal dwelling; and (2) the draft amendment to Article III.C.7, to require that a detached ADU be allowed only on conforming lots. It was also pointed out that some other articles in the CPO mention minimum square footage for dwellings, and those would have to be amended.

The changes to the draft amendment of IV.H.2 arrived at by group were:

IV.H.2. A One detached ADU located on the same lot as an incidental to the principal dwelling unit shall be permitted on any conforming lot. Refer to Article V for building permit requirement. Applicants should also consult Article III. for the property dimensions, setbacks, and density requirements.

- ✦ The change to the draft amendment of III.C.7 arrived at by the group was:

III.C.7. The maximum density allowed (including multifamily developments) is one principal dwelling unit with two ADUs OR one duplex ~~per lot of record~~ for every conforming lot.

The group discussed concerns raised at the hearing about maximum allowable sizes of ADUs. The view was expressed that “incidental to” the principal dwelling does not make it clear enough that an ADU must be small relative to the principal dwelling. I. Vann suggested adding Article IV.H.3, which would read:

IV.H.3. The total square foot area of all ADUs on a lot shall be no more than 40% of the conditioned square foot area of the principal dwelling or 1,200 square feet, whichever is greater.

She explained that if the original principal dwelling happened to be smaller than 1,200 square feet, a larger detached dwelling unit could be built, and it would become the principal dwelling. The Task Force agreed that it would be a good change to the ordinance, though it would be up to the Planning Board to decide whether to propose it.

The group agreed that Articles IV.A.1 and Article XI. Definitions – Dwelling Unit should be amended to remove references to minimum square footage for dwelling units.

L. Casey (member of the Planning Board) said that there was testimony at the Planning Board hearing on December 6th advocating that ADUs be rented only to family members of owners. That recommendation was rejected by the board in deliberations. She reported that the Board determined that it would be very difficult to verify who is “family,” a task that would be made even harder if the property owner were an entity such as a trust. In addition, long-time renters might have to be evicted if the property were to change hands. Finally, it was not clear why family members in an ADU would necessarily be better neighbors than non-family renters would be. The group agreed.

C. Pratt requested an amendment to Article V. Building Permits to specify when building permits are NOT required. The amendment would also require property owners to notify the selectmen in advance of starting construction of an exempt building. L. Casey reminded the group that drafting the requested amendment would fall outside the Housing Task Force’s remit under its charter, since it was explicitly NOT housing-related. It was agreed that the Planning Board would take ownership of drafting a proposed amendment for 2025.

B. Smith asked how the public hearing on the revised amendments would be publicized. L. Casey said a notice of the hearing would go out the following week, at which time copies would be provided to the Town Clerk and the Selectmen’s office. The notice and the draft amendments will be posted on the Town of Sullivan website, and the notice will be sent to be posted the Sullivan Community Facebook page. She said she is also writing an article for the January-February issue of the Sullivan Newsletter.

B. Smith moved to make the revisions to CPO Articles III.C.7, IV.A.1, IV.H and XI Dwelling Units as discussed. W. Pelletier seconded. All “aye.”

- C. **Master Plan Update.** Updated Vision Statement and Housing chapters of the master plan were discussed by the Planning Board at the December 6th regular meeting. Some minor revisions to the Housing chapter were recommended. L. Casey will provide those to I. Vann. L. Casey will talk to the Planning Board Chair about rolling hearings and adoption of updated chapters, rather than waiting for all chapter updates to be completed.
- D. **Approval of Minutes.** Draft minutes of the October 27th meeting were distributed. W. Pelletier moved to approve the minutes; G. Pratt seconded. The minutes as written were approved unanimously.
- E. **Adjournment.** L. Casey adjourned the meeting at 3:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leslie Casey".

Leslie Casey

Sullivan Housing Task Force, Chair