

Town of Candia
HOP Steering Committee
Thursday, November 21, 2024
Unapproved Minutes

Members Present: Carla Penfield, Melissa Madden, Mark Chalbeck, Judith Szot, Pattie Davis, Sarah Sargent, Brian Sargent

On Zoom for a Portion of the Meeting: Wendy Ducharme

Guests: Ron Severino, Scott Davis

This was an informational meeting to get insights from Ron Severino as a housing developer in Candia.

Carla opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance at 2:00 pm. The committee introduced themselves to Ron Severino and Carla opened the floor for questions.

Brian Sargent asked if affordable housing was really \$350,000 and whether a house could be built for that. Ron Severino replied that the biggest cost was the land. Land costs have about doubled since the Covid pandemic. Road development, labor, and material costs have also dramatically increased. Two to three years ago, the cost of a laborer (including insurance and benefits) was about \$20 an hour. Now it is over \$50 an hour.

Carla asked Ron if he had any ideas to make housing more affordable. He said to cut down on the lot size and cut down on the road construction necessary. That means cluster housing or some version of cluster housing or conservation zoning. Ron reported that Raymond has had conservation zoning for years. Housing is clustered together on smaller lots on a large parcel, keeping more open space land in conservation and limiting the length of road required.

The committee discussed Candia's aquifer and the town's significant wetlands or poorly drained soils. Ron stated that Candia has "self-appointed" conservation areas because of these wetlands and soils.

The committee also discussed ADUs and whether they were considered affordable housing. The committee also discussed septic systems and the availability of a soil map. It was mentioned that the town is doing an updated map. Ron said that once the maps are done, it will become obvious that only a certain percentage of Candia is buildable and obviously you can't build if there is no buildable land.

Some options to create more affordable housing in Candia is to shrink lot sizes, create more conservation easements (see discussion above), ADUs and cluster housing.

The committee had a wide-ranging discussion about the rules for workforce housing and the viability of various housing types.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made and seconded at 3:35 pm and the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Pattie Davis