

Affordable Reality in Westport.

This paper will address the reality of affordable housing in Westport and the steps undertaken by the Town to further encourage a diversity of housing. It has long been our goal to service all of our citizens including those in need of assistance. We do have a diversity of housing stock for low income groups, special needs, the homeless and the elderly. 8-30 g counts only units constructed after 1990 and units which are deed restricted for 40 years. The majority of units in the town of Westport which service our lower income groups do not fall into either category, but they still exist.

2010 census reports 10399 dwelling units-used for calculating 8-30 G points- includes single and multi-family units. (single family homes count 9860)*

1069 documented apartments in private "single family" units - accessory, elderly conversion, pre 1959 only 7 are deed restricted for 40 years to comply with 8 30 G **

539 total apartments in complexes ***

288 units total completed units affordable either Government Assisted, Deed Restricted but categorized as affordable 2.75% as per 8-30 G requirements.

9 group homes with 43 total known beds—counts for 20 affordable but ineligible units.

21 units approved, but not yet completed- Gault 2, Sasco Brook, Bedford

43 low income units not on the DECD list—low income housing which does not fully comply with all aspects of funding source—shelter vs service, but still services low income citizens. The Saugatuck, Homestead, Star (6 beds)

2 trailer parks with total units per park unknown as of the writing of this document estimation of 50 units.

Westport has always believed and encouraged increasing the diversity of housing stock while maintaining our small town character. It clearly stated as a goal in our POCD. In recent years the Planning and Zoning commission has taken legislative action to further encourage diversity of housing. The listing below represents legislation enacted to promote diversity of housing within the town to comply with 8-30 G requirements.

1.	§16-2.12	Mobile Home Replacement Units	80% affordable
2.	§18	Residence C Zone	15% affordable
3.	§19	Affordable Housing Zone	30% affordable
4.	§19A	Affordable Housing Zone/Workforce	20% affordable
			10% work force
5.	§20	Municipal Housing Zone	100% affordable

6.	§32-1	Supportive Housing	100% affordable
7.	§32-12	Inclusionary 2 family & Multi-family Housing	20% affordable
8.	32.15 and 32.15 A	Managed Residential Community and senior residential community on Town Owned land	60% affordable
9.	§32-17	Affordable/Middle Income Housing on Town Land	50% affordable 50% (80% AMI)
10.	§39A	Inclusionary Housing Zone	20% affordable

In addition to the above, Westport has effectively maintained its diversity of housing stock by encouraging the legalization of existing apartments in private homes. The town recognized that there were over 1000 units which would continue to benefit lower incomes, but do not comply with the statute. (home owners do not want to deed restrict for 40 years) The P&Z took multiple steps to preserve these housing units.

The 2010 Amnesty program to legalize pre-existing accessory apartments, including pre 1959 resulted in over 200 small in home apartments being legalized.

32-18 Historic Structures- has legalized accessory apartments in historic homes.

Text amendment 469-created the definition of Managed Residential Community which allowed for the conversion of the Saugatuck School into low cost housing for the elderly. This project of 36 units does not count toward 8-30 G but does provide low cost housing for seniors.

Success story 1-IHZ success story

Although the commission passed text amendments 618 and 619 to allow affordable housing in 8 specific split commercial/residential zones in Dec. 2010, there were zero applications until 2014. The Geigers property has been approved, by straw vote, by the commission –final approval will occur 2/5/14. The project will be fully compliant with 39 A. Mixed use in commercial zone, and multifamily including 20% affordable in the residential zone. A second project by the same development team is also in the design stages.

Success story 2 ---Dramatic upgrading of existing low income housing stock.

In the past 5 years, Westport via the Housing Authority, embarked on an ambitious plan to upgrade the aging low income housing units at both Hales Court and Sasco Creek. Hales Court was built in the 1950's and consisted of small single family homes. The entire development was demolished and rebuilt with twice the number of units-78. Sasco Creek contained aged single family trailers. This development is currently under construction and also results in an increase in affordable units . The old units are being replaced with beautiful town house apartments.

Abuses of 8-30 G

Certain developers regularly threaten using 8-30 G to break local zoning laws. One such instance occurred in recent years. Gorham Ave, is a 1.5 parcel of land, with 2 existing homes within a small single family neighborhood. The developer threatened to build 20 units via 8-30 G. After costly litigation, the town settled out of court for 5 additional single family homes + the two existing homes all 7 homes on a 1.5 acres of land. Settlement resulted in zero affordable units.

The economic reality

Westport has always been pro-active in creating various projects which would allow for an increase in housing stock to be compliant with 8-30 G. The issue is one of economics, the cost of raw land in Westport exceeds \$1M per acre. Westport is thereby adversely affected by 8-30 g due to the high cost of land. In 2014, it became evident that we had recovered from the economic meltdown of 2008. There are plans, well known to the town to present 8-30 g projects with 400 units. We also know of plans for an additional 600 units.

*From the town assessor list of "Condos in Westport" and the 2010 census

**Planning and Zoning Dept. records.

***Town Assessor documents plus actual physical counts of known complexes not listed on "Condos in Westport" document.

Catherine A Walsh

Past Chair Westport P&Z, current member P&Z

2/4/14