

Stonington Housing Opportunities Commission Ordinance

WHEREAS, planning to ensure a full range of housing choices for households of all incomes, ages and abilities, is foundational to maintaining a vibrant and prosperous community; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Stonington recognizes the need for a coordinated, collaborative approach to address the complex issue of housing affordability; and

WHEREAS, the Town should be a leader in developing innovative strategies and approaches to addressing housing need,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY ORDAINED BY THE LEGAL VOTERS OF THE TOWN OF STONINGTON IN LAWFUL TOWN MEETING DULY ASSEMBLED THAT:

Section 1. That the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Stonington be amended by adding a new ordinance to read as follows:

- A. **Establishment.** The Town hereby establishes a Housing Opportunities Commission.
- B. **Purpose.** The Housing Opportunities Commission will serve as a planning and advisory body, and as a center of expertise and communication, with the objective to ensure Stonington offers a full range of housing choices for all households. The Commission will work through the Board of Selectmen, in coordination with other boards, commissions, and departments, while also engaging businesses, organizations and residents on matters pertaining to housing affordability.
- C. **Terms of office.** The Commission shall be composed of five regular members and two alternate members who will serve staggered three-year terms, appointed by the Board of Selectman. The initial appointments by the Board of Selectmen shall be for one-, two- and three-year terms, and thereafter all terms shall be for three years.
- D. **Membership.** All Commission members and alternate members shall be electors of the Town of Stonington. The Commission should have diverse representation and views, along with relevant areas of expertise. When possible, preference should be given to ensure membership includes: one member with experience in real estate/housing; one from the social services field, and one with planning and land use experience. The additional seats should be given to those who will help ensure the balanced and diverse views needed to build collaboration on these complex issues.
- E. **Powers and duties.** The Commission shall, among other things:
 - i. Work in a collaborative manner to evaluate, define, and monitor the need for affordable housing, and identify approaches to meet those needs. The term

“Affordable Housing” shall be as defined by Connecticut General Statute Section 8-39a, as may be amended.

- ii. Prepare an updated Affordable Housing Plan for Stonington, and continue to perform periodic updates at least every five years, according to the provisions of Connecticut General Statute Section 8-30j, as may be amended.
- iii. Make recommendations on housing policies and practices designed to meet the need for affordable housing in Stonington, related to both home ownership and rentals, including possible changes to zoning regulations and ordinances, as well as exploring the potential for a local Housing Trust Fund. These recommendations should be developed in collaboration with relevant staff and Boards/Commissions. On no less than a semi-annual basis, an update should be shared with the Board of Selectman.
- iv. Work with Planning and Zoning, Economic Development, Human Services and other town functions as appropriate, on matters related to affordable housing. Similarly, ensure proactive engagement of relevant Boards/Commissions.
- v. Monitor legislation and regulations relevant to affordable housing. When applicable, work with the Board of Selectmen on outreach and advocacy related to relevant public policy.
- vi. Monitor the availability of grants, programs, partnerships and other resources to support affordable housing planning and development.
- vii. Develop and maintain a program of public engagement, communication, and education on the topic of affordable housing for the residents of Stonington, and, when applicable, stakeholders from around the region or state.
- viii. Other responsibilities relevant to affordable housing as determined by the Board of Selectmen.

Section 2.

- A. All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed.
- B. This ordinance shall become effective fifteen (15) days after the date of publication of notice of its passage, per Connecticut General Statute § 7-157 (a).