

Housing & Planning BOL Meeting Minutes - Final



Committee Chair: Shanae Williams

800 Michaelian Office Bldg.
148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor
White Plains, NY 10601
www.westchesterlegislators.com

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

1:00 PM

Committee Room

CALL TO ORDER

Please note: Meetings of the Board of Legislators and its committees are held at the Michaelian Office Building, 148 Martine Avenue, White Plains, New York, 10601, and remotely via the WebEx video conferencing system. Legislators may participate in person or via Webex. Members of the public may attend meetings in person at any of its locations, or view it online on the Westchester County Legislature's website: <https://westchestercountyny.legistar.com/>. This website also provides links to materials for all matters to be discussed at a given meeting.

Meeting jointly with the Committee on Economic Development.

With a quorum present, Chair Williams called the meeting to order at 1:04PM.

Others in Attendance: GUESTS: Richard Nightingale, Tim Foley, Mark Weingarten, Andrew Fine (remote), Jessica Ann Bacher (remote), Tiffany Zezula (remote), Ron Abad (remote), Peter Bernstein (remote), Dennis Hanratty (remote); BOL: Legislator Benjamin Boykin, Legislator Judah Holstein, Legislator Emiljana Ulaj, Legislator Catherine Parker (remote), Legislator Nancy Barr, Legislator Erika Pierce and Dayana Gómez-Holguín

Present: Legislator Williams, Legislator Imamura, Legislator Williams Johnson and Legislator Woodson-Samuels

Remote: Legislator Smith

MINUTES APPROVAL

I. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Discussion with developers and stakeholders on providing more affordable housing in the County.

Guests:

Open New York: Andrew Fine, Policy Director

Land Use Law Center: Jessica Ann Bacher, Executive Director and Tiffany Zezula, Deputy Director

Community Housing Innovations, Inc.: Ron Abad, CEO

Westhab, Inc.: Richard Nightingale, President & CEO

The Building & Realty Institute (BRI) of Westchester and the Mid-Hudson Region: Tim Foley, CEO and Executive Vice President

WBP Development LLC : William G. Balter, President

Westchester-Putnam Workers Family Party: Peter Bernstein, Chair

Mount Vernon United Tenants: Dennis Hanratty, Executive Director

The guests shared their perspectives on affordable housing and what they consider are areas

of improvement as well as successes. Some of the County programs that incentivize to build affordable housing are the Lands Acquisition Program – as it brings construction costs down, and Flex Funding – offering tax credits. A possible incentive for Westchester can be similar to a program established in New York City called limited equity co-ops, which includes specific financial needs requirements that facilitate ownership. The Welcome Home Westchester campaign also allows for developers to speak with local officials regarding home ownership as well. Zoning and process have been bigger issues that delay or prohibit the construction of these homes and in turn, create a bigger expense. Comprehensive plans can be an expensive undertaking but it can also help to bring the community and be considered for zoning. The Land Use Law Center runs a training program to bring municipalities into the conversation to collectively think creatively to build housing on available sites. Other concerns expressed include communities not wanting the impact on school districts due to increased student enrollments. Other suggestions made including ensuring to have inclusive affordable housing and even using County-owned properties to build affordable housing.

II. OTHER BUSINESS

III. RECEIVE & FILE

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Legislator Woodson-Samuels, seconded by Legislator Imamura, the Committee adjourned at 2:02pm.