



TOWN OF LEDYARD

CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL

Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez

MINUTES
PUBLIC HEARING
LEDYARD TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS - ANNEX BUILDING
HYBRID FORMAT

DRAFT

PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

6:00 PM; JUNE 4, 2025

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Rodriguez called to order the Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m. regarding *“State of Connecticut 2025 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) Application in the amount of up-to \$1 million – Habitat for Humanity - Colby Drive, Ledyard Connecticut”*
- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- III. PROCEDURE OF THE PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Rodriguez welcomed all to the Hybrid Meeting. She stated for the members of the Town Council and the Public who were participating via video conference that the remote meeting information was available on the Agenda that was posted on the Town’s Website – Granicus-Legistar Meeting Portal.

Chairman Rodriguez asked those attending remotely to put their name and address in the “Chat” and that they would be called upon during the Public Comment portion of tonight’s meeting.

IV. CALL OF THE PUBLIC HEARING

The following call of the Public Hearing was read by Town Council Administrative Assistant Roxanne M. Maher:

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Town of Ledyard will conduct a Hybrid Format Public Hearing (In-Person and Video Conference) by the Town Council on Wednesday, June 4, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at Town Hall Annex located at 741 Colonel Ledyard Hwy, Ledyard, CT to discuss the Fiscal Year 2025 Community Development Block Grant program and to solicit citizen input.

Maximum award limits: \$2,000,000 for Public Housing Modernization with priority to State Sponsored Housing Portfolio (SSHP) and \$1,000,000 for Infrastructure associated with the development of Affordable Housing (e.g., streets sidewalks, sewer lines). Major activity categories are Acquisition, Housing Rehabilitation, Public Housing Modernization, Community Facilities, Public Services, and Economic Development. Projects funded with CDBG allocations must carry out at least one of three National Objectives: benefit to low- and moderate-income persons, elimination of slums and blight, or meeting urgent community development needs. For the 2025 year, \$12.2 million in grant funds are available for eligible communities statewide.

The purpose of the public hearing is to obtain citizen’s views on the Town’s community development and housing needs and to discuss the Town of Ledyard’s proposed application. The Town Department of Land Use & Planning on behalf of the Town of Ledyard anticipates applying for the maximum grant amount of \$1,000,000 for housing infrastructure. This grant will support infrastructure design and engineering on lots 8, 9, and 11 Colby Drive for development by Habitat for Humanity into 16 single family and 11 duplex homes.

If you are unable to attend the public hearing, you may direct written comments to Elizabeth Burdick, Director of Land Use & Planning at the Town of Ledyard, 741 Colonel Ledyard Hwy, Ledyard, CT 06339 or you may telephone 860-464-3215. In addition, information may be obtained at the above address between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:45 p.m. Monday through Thursdays.

The Town of Ledyard promotes fair housing and makes all programs available to low- and moderate-income households regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, marital status, age, lawful source of income, familial status, learning disability or physical/mental disability, or sexual orientation.

All are encouraged to attend. The hearing is accessible to the handicapped. Any disabled persons requiring special assistance or non-English speaking persons should contact Kristen Chapman ADA Coordinator at 860-464-3222 at least five days prior to the hearing.

Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action

In-person attendance will be at the
Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building
741 Colonel Ledyard Highway, Ledyard, Connecticut

Please join the video conference meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone at:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82689718629?pwd=jGFvb0YbRA8N81asN9UR6huuopHhIU.1>
or by audio only telephone +1 646 558 8656; Meeting ID: 826 8971 8629

For the Ledyard Town Council
s/s Naomi Rodriguez, Chair

Please publish twice on the following days:

1st publication: Wednesday, May 21, 2025
2nd publication: Wednesday, May 28, 2025

V. PRESENTATIONS

Chairman Rodriguez stated in addition to Land Use Director/Town Planner Elizabeth Burdick that the following representatives were present this evening to provide some background and answer residents regarding their proposed project on Colby Drive: Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Southeastern Connecticut Sarah Lufler, Regional Planner for Center for Housing Opportunity Eastern Connecticut Caroline Wells, and Director of the Center for Housing Opportunity Eastern Connecticut Beth Sabilia.

Chairman Rodriguez deferred to Ms. Lufler to present Habitat for Humanity's Affordable Housing Project planned for Colby Drive.

Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Southeastern Connecticut Sarah Lufler thanked the Town Council for scheduling tonight's Public Hearing to present the 2025 Community Development Block Grant program to assist Habitat for Humanity with the construction of infrastructure (road, water, sewer, utilities) to support the development of an Affordable Housing Neighborhood on Colby Drive.

Ms. Lufler provided some background stating about 20-years ago Conover was looking to develop multi-family housing on Colby Drive. She stated that Conover had roughed in the road and began putting some infrastructure in the ground, which included some storm drains. However, she stated after Conover decided to abandon their project that they donated the property to Habitat for Humanity.

Ms. Lufler stated that Habitat for Humanity of Southeastern Connecticut has been working through the process to construct 38 Affordable Housing Units on Colby Drive for ownership. She stated the \$1 million CDBG Grant Funding would be used toward building the infrastructure (road, water, sewer and utilities) to support the construction of 38 homes at 8, 9 & 11 Colby Drive. She stated as she mentioned that there was already some infrastructure in the ground, which included some storm drains from when Conover was looking to develop multi-family housing on Colby Drive about 20-years ago. She explained that the road had been roughed-in and that they would connect Colby Drive from the end of the cul-de-sac and that the road would come out by the Salty Hefer Restaurant on Colonel Ledyard Highway. She stated that there has been discussions to connect Colby Drive to Colonel Ledyard Highway since the 1980's, however, it has never materialized.

Ms. Lufler went on to explain that Habitat for Humanity has submitted an 8-30g Application for Affordable Housing. She explained that Habitat for Humanity has an *Affordability Plan* and that the buyers would agree to the *Affordability Plan*; which meant that the deed would include a 40- year restriction and a qualifying income requirement. She stated that if the home was sold during the 40-year deed restriction that it must be sold to persons that meet the income qualification; meaning that they were earning between 40% - 80% of the Southeastern Connecticut's median income which was currently \$110,000 for a family of four.

Ms. Lufler noted that Habitat for Humanity has chosen four different home designs for Colby Drive; noting that the homes were well designed noting that they were energy efficient and because they would be using some Community Investment Funding (CFI) that the homes would be passive certified, meaning that they would meet stringent energy efficiency standards, aiming for minimal heating and cooling needs. She stated that they would be really good homes for 38 families that would last forever and where families could live affordably. She provided an overview of the Colby Drive Plan noting that there would be a few out roads along Colby Drive with a mixture of single-family and multifamily homes in the form of duplexes; and that the Plan included sidewalks, bus stops, and green spaces noting that it was a laid out as a community not just 38 housing units, because they were working to build neighborhoods.

Ms. Lufler stated for Income Qualified Buyers there were two different lending mechanisms explaining that there was a third-party Affordable Mortgage Program, and there was Habitat for Humanity. She stated that through the Habitat for Humanity Program the buyer was guaranteed not to spend more than 30% of their gross income on their housing i.e. mortgage, property taxes, and property insurance. She stated that the homes would be constructed by volunteers from the community as well as the new homeowners, noting that the concept was "*Neighbors Building Homes for Neighbors*".

Ms. Lufler went on to state during the past year Habitat for Humanity has been working closely with the Department of Housing (DOH) noting that they have made several suggestions which has helped Habitat for Humanity with their CDBG Grant and the Community Investment Fund Grant Application and that their work with DOH has also helped them to get into the pool for state money as well, explaining that all of these funding opportunities would work together to try to help with the funding gap to construct the infrastructure. She stated should Habitat for Humanity received this \$1 million CDBG Grant that it would help move them closer to getting shovels in the ground. Ms. Lufler stated that she along with her colleagues would be happy to answer questions regarding their request for the \$1 million CDBG Grant funding that would be used to construct needed road infrastructure to support their Affordable Housing Plan for Colby Drive .

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Mike Cherry, 5 Whippoorwill Drive, Gales Ferry, stated that he supported the submission of the 2025 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) Application in the amount of up-to \$1 million to assist Habitat for Humanity with the construction of the road and required infrastructure to support their Affordable Housing Plan for Colby Drive.

Mr. Cherry continued by stating that he has served as the Chairman of the following Town Commissions: Planning Commission; Planning Zoning Commission, Economic Development Commission; and the Water Pollution Control Authority; and he noted that he was currently serving as a Member of the Economic Development Commission. He stated the reason that he mentioned all of the Commissions he has served on and Chaired was because the Town has talked about developing this area for decades.

Mr. Cherry stated that he recalled working with Conover, and that he believed Mr. Treaster, who was also present this evening would also remember that Development Application as well. He stated that he was happy when Conover donated the property to Habitat for Humanity instead of just sitting on land. He noted that when the Planning & Zoning Commission was working on the Town's Affordable Plan that Councilor St. Vil, who was serving on the Commission at that time, pointed out that it was clear that to have *Affordability* that they needed *Density*; and to have *Density* that they needed to have *Infrastructure*. He stated that this CDBG Grant funding would help them build the required infrastructure and was a good step forward.

Mr. Chery went on to state that many ask what is affordable; and he noted that we see homes and Ledyard selling for a half a million dollars. He stated that he did not think any of us ever envisioned the home they lived in when they were growing up would be worth \$500,000, but that the times have changed. He stated that the median family income for a family of four \$110,000 that those who would qualify to purchase these Affordable Housing homes would need to be earning between 40% - 80% which was \$80,000. He stated Affordability was defined as not spending more than 30% of your income on housing which would be \$2,000 a month; and that it does not necessarily cover electricity, heat, telephone, the internet; and all the other things that that were required to live in today's world. He stated for someone who just graduated from school that trying to buy a home in that range is was near impossible. He stated the Colby Drive Habitat for Humanity Plan would build critical mass and Affordable Homes in Ledyard Center, noting that it was a win-win-in so many different ways and the he strongly supported the CDBG Grant Application and that he asked the Town Council to support it at their Special Meeting later this evening. Thank you.

Ms. Deborah Edwards, 30 Bluff Road West, Gales Ferry, stated that she supported the submission of the 2025 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) Application in the amount of up-to \$1 million to assist Habitat for Humanity with the construction of the road and required infrastructure to support their Affordable Housing Plan for Colby Drive. However, she was looking for clarification regarding the following:

- During a Town Council Meeting that Mayor Allyn, III, stated that if Ledyard did not have a certain percentage of Affordable Housing that they would not be eligible to certain discretionary grant funding programs; and she questioned whether this CDBG Grant was one of those discretionary grant programs, and if the "Fair Share" Bill was approved next year how it would affect Ledyard.
- Whether the 40-year Deed Restrictions would affect the Colby Drive homes qualifying to meet Affordable Housing requirements.

Ms. Lufler responded stating that Habitat for Humanity has submitted a 8-30g Affordable Housing Application for the homes on Colby Drive. She explained that one of the 8-30 statutory clauses required a 40-year Deed Restriction. She stated that Habitat for Humanity would maintain ownership of the property and sell the housing units individually. She stated with the expiration of the 40-year Deed Restriction Clause that Habitat for Humanity would always have the first right of refusal, if a homeowner wanted to sell their home. She stated the Affordable Agreement basically require a family to sell their home to someone at 80%o the median income or lower. Therefore, she stated that they believe with both of these provisions they would meet the State's and "*Affordable Housing*" requirements.

Land Use Director/Town Planner Elizabeth Burdick stated that she just received a copy of the new Bill #5002 “*Fair Share Housing Units*”; noting that the Bill passed the House and the Senate and that it was on the Governor’s desk waiting to be signed. He stated that Bill #5002 does speak to a formula relative to the number of affordable housing units that town must have. She stated that the Bill included a provisions for towns that cannot meet the number of affordable housing units per the formula. She explained that towns could go the State Legislature to tell them why their town did not have the number of affordable housing units per the formula.

Ms. Edwards questioned if the town does not reach that number of affordable housing units threshold whether the State could withhold discretionary funding like state funding and or other funding from the Town. Ms. Burdick stated because Bill #5002 was brand new that she has not had time to read the entire document and she asked whether Director of the Center for Housing Opportunity Eastern Connecticut Beth Sabilia could provide more information.

Director of the Center for Housing Opportunity Eastern Connecticut Beth Sabilia stated as Ms. Burdick mentioned that House Bill #5002 “*Fair Share*” has passed both the House and the Senate. She explained that “*Fair Share*” was what was being referred to tonight as “*Fair Share*”; commonly known as an allocation that has been made for the number of housing units for your town noting that it was not all Affordable Housing unites but the number of Housing Units. She stated from listening to the Legislative Testimony and the Hearings that it was her understanding that towns were going to be asked to plan for their Zoning Regulations rewrites, which was coming up soon for all towns, to include 25% for affordable housing plan, and to develop a priority housing portion of that affordable housing plan. She stated if a town cannot accommodate planning for an allocation of 25% for Affordable Housing, that it could explain why they could not. She noted as an example that in a community like Ledyard where infrastructure was critical, noting that the same was true for the towns of Old Lyme, Preston and other rural communities that there would be some limitations for towns, and how they could respond to the Plan to have 25% of Affordable Housing, due to infrastructure. She this was what *fair share* was about and that she would send them what Ledyard’s Affordable Housing allocation was going to be under Bill #5002 for them to look at how fairly dense it would be. She stated that the number they were talking about was for towns to plan for 25% of their housing units to be Affordable Housing.

Mr. Eric Treaster, 10 Huntington Way, Ledyard, stated that this was the best 8-30g Application he has seen and that he supported the submission of the 2025 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) Application in the amount of up-to \$1 million to assist Habitat for Humanity with the construction of the road and required infrastructure to support their affordable housing plan for Colby Drive. However, he had some questions with regard to the need for a Special Permit.

Land Use Director/Town Planner Elizabeth Burdick; Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Southeastern Connecticut Sarah Lufler, and Director of the Center for Housing Opportunity Eastern Connecticut Beth Sabilia responded and clarified residents comments.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Rodriguez stated hearing no further public comment, that the Public Hearing was adjourned at 6:29 p.m.

Chairman Rodriguez noted that a Special Town Council Meeting will follow this Public Hearing to address the “*Certified Resolution of Application- Small Cities Program – Habitat for Humanity for housing infrastructure; authorizing the Mayor to submit a 2025 Application in the amount of up-to \$1 million to the State Department of Housing (DOH) for funds under the CDBG Small Cities Program*”.

Transcribed by Roxanne M. Maher

Administrative Assistant to the Town Council

I, S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman of the Ledyard Town Council, hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Public Hearing held on June 4, 2025

Attest: _____
S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman