

# NEWBURGH HOUSING REPORT

## RECORD OF SEPTEMBER 2020 COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS

---

The Leviticus Fund, in partnership with Kevin Dwarka LLC and Pace Land Use Law Center conducted four community listening sessions in September 2020. Stakeholders, community organizers, the City, and others assisted in promoting the event online and through email distribution. Below is a record of the housing needs that residents raised during the sessions. Housing needs have been grouped into four topic areas: (1) Housing Conditions (2) Housing Affordability (3) Housing Supply and (4) Neighborhood Vitality

### Housing Conditions

- Apartments may still have lead paint thereby creating a health concern for families.
- The quality of affordable housing matters. The condition can be inhumane.
- Some folks say we have plenty of affordable housing, but the quality of this housing is paramount.
- Some housing is still in need of mold and lead abatement.
- Newburgh is clear on the responsibility of landlords to meet inspection requirements. Unfortunately, code enforcement can lead to condemnation, thereby leaving people homeless.
- People often fail to report situations that are condemnable because they do not want to lose their home. Fear of losing one's home is a reality of high cost burdens.
- Working with outside contractors is not good. Residents need to be more involved with any housing put up.
- There is a decline in a landlord's ability to find renters with an income level appropriate for a property they want to rent.
- Employed applicants attempting to lease available housing units may not make enough money to be a safe rental prospect to the landlord.
- Under the current way that housing courts work, landlords are restricted in dealing with people who do not pay their rent. These tenants may include residents who may be low-income, but they may not qualify for rental assistance.
- Tenants face repercussions from landlords because they complained about housing conditions.
- The City of Newburgh has a set of regulations that plumbing and electrical work be done by a limited supply of contractors.
- There are challenges around preservation and new development. We need to preserve housing units but the changing market dynamic in Hudson Valley is driving up sales and rental prices.
- Code enforcement is an issue.
- Property managers are disregarding the newly adopted tenant protection laws. These laws are in effect, but they need to be used effectively.
- Residents do not have sufficient access to the courts to address housing condition concerns.
- There is a disconnect between landlords and renters. With poverty, there is sometimes this perception that landlords only do the bare minimum with regard to maintenance and upkeep, justifying lower standards on the basis that the housing is cost assisted. With rental assistance, the landlord may actually be getting the equivalent of fair market value for the rent but not providing fair market amenities.
- It is difficult to get in touch with landlords.
- Landlords own properties but they do not live in Newburgh.

## NEWBURGH HOUSING REPORT: RECORD OF SEPTEMBER 2020 COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS

- Buildings have leaks that need to be patched up and faucets that need to be replaced.
- There is a need for extermination.
- It is hard to get a landlord to accept temporary assistance as payment for rent.
- Landlord refuses to make repairs on plumbing (frozen pipes).
- Tenants do not have a place to turn to for legal advice and do not qualify for the legal services that are provided for low income residents.
- Newburgh does not really have tenant associations.
- We may have information and data via Building Blocks but there needs to be education to make sure the data leads to actual physical improvements.

### Housing Affordability

- People renewed their leases and rents went up but that was not supposed to be done.
- A lot of people searching for housing experience financial troubles paying for the application fee and security deposits.
- It is hard for housing seekers to finding one-bedroom apartments at the fair market rent that they can afford.
- Finding low-income housing is hard.
- Keeping up with high taxes creates a burden for both property owners and renters.
- High taxes lead to deterioration of housing conditions.
- Renovations can lead to existing tenants to be priced out of that unit. They are no longer eligible for them.
- Housing is expensive.
- So many people are applying for low-income housing, but they fail to qualify in terms of income requirements and then left with nothing.
- Landlords insist upon a certain level of income.
- The fee to fill out a housing application is a barrier.
- Landlords are not after evicting people, but they are after their rent.
- The housing market is hot and there is a drive for housing stock in our area right now.
- There is no easy path to go from being a renter to becoming a homeowner (like coops or land trusts) without incurring all the costs of homeownership.
- Real impediment to affordability and homeownership is property taxes which can be as high as the mortgage and make it harder to rent out at affordable levels.
- Because homes are being purchased and then rented out, rents are astronomical. People cannot afford even renting home.
- 1BRs are \$1200 and up.
- Rents are high. They are Westchester rents. I can get an apartment for \$1100, but it may not be quality housing.
- Rent is rising even in senior citizen homes.
- Rent is rising by \$45 with each renewal.
- Senior housing stops being senior housing, forcing seniors to have to move in with their children.
- There is a migration of folks coming from New York City, and that is who landlords want to rent today.
- The volumes of people moving up and having cash readily available is astonishing.
- Lower income, middle-income households are challenged in obtaining first time home.

## NEWBURGH HOUSING REPORT: RECORD OF SEPTEMBER 2020 COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS

- Income level have either stayed flat or declined, and yet the cost of housing rises with rising fees, taxes, burdens in terms of compliance with ever changing regulations, making for a more complicated more charged relationship with those who want housing and those that are supplying housing.
- Renters need to understand that the cost of maintenance is horrendous for landlords. Plumbing is the highest cost of maintaining properties, especially 100-year-old properties. A renter may be employed and not pay rent in spite of receiving federal assistance. The landlord still has to pay water, taxes, school taxes. Landlord meets these costs by using retirement income.
- There is a high cost of houses because of gentrification.
- Residents with housing vouchers have housing voucher units have faced astronomical rent increases.
- There is a long-standing issue with affordability and pushing people out of their homes.
- Public utility rates are rising in Hudson Valley.
- There are intimidation tactics in which landlords attempt eviction without due process. Legal services may not find a resolution.
- Even if you grew up in Newburgh your whole life, you cannot find an apartment.
- There is a cycle in which roads get fixed up, housing costs rise, and people who have been in the community for a while get pushed out.
- New management companies are taking over properties in Newburgh. They are making apartments affordable but requiring prospective tenants to make considerably more than the rent and have high credit score.
- There is a certain stigma attached to affordable housing that is hard for us to name. It makes it hard for us to have a broader policy conversation. There are various needs for affordable housing. We need a framework that lays out those needs.
- There is a wide gap between Orange County AMI and Newburgh's AMI.
- The restrictions and rules with low income housing are problematic. If a resident of a low-income housing unit makes more money, they may end up being penalized by having to pay more.
- The way landlords evaluate credit position and the application fee are barriers to housing.
- Some can only afford to rent rooms rather than a whole apartment.
- Abuse directed toward undocumented community is atrocious – residents are being charged for utilities they are not even using.
- Landlords overcharge undocumented residents by demanding security deposit, first month rent, last month rent.

### Housing Supply

- The lack of small affordable units makes it challenging for singles and couples.
- We also need 2/3 bedrooms as well.
- There is a need for homeownership and affordable homeownership. The state is proposing a new source for homeownership that could perhaps be used in Newburgh.
- There is a challenge of making housing accessible for seniors and homeowners.
- Rental units are needed.
- Aging in place is hard.
- There is a lack of housing stock.
- There is not enough low-income housing.
- The burden on meeting regional housing needs is on Newburgh.
- There is lack of transparency in trying to obtain affordable buildings from the City of Newburgh.

## NEWBURGH HOUSING REPORT: RECORD OF SEPTEMBER 2020 COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS

- The City's disposition of City-owned properties does not let residents invest in homes in the way that they can.
- There is confusion in the process of obtaining and upholding a City-owned property.
- There is an 18-month requirement for renovating a City-owned building once acquired by a resident. This renovation can be hundreds/thousands of dollars.
- Non-profit organizations do not pay taxes.

### Neighborhood Vitality

- The physical condition of streets is getting better.
- The City of Newburgh is helpful with the land use approval process.
- There are challenges of finding property owners of vacant property. This has been a challenge with our scattered site development.
- Landlords may have multiple LLCs and have a lot of land. We need to know which LLCs are attached to which person. We need to know who is responsible for taking care of the housing stock.
- Homeowners have challenges in keeping up their homes (putting on a roof, painting, etc). The City is not offering sufficient support for renovation.
- We have missed the boat on ensuring diverse housing.
- Need better transportation for seniors, including ways for seniors to get out on Sundays and need better communication with seniors on infrastructure upgrades
- In the school district, we see a lot of children who are homeless. They have had to get up early in the morning to be bussed into Newburgh from outside areas. The impacts of homelessness on family and children has been incredible.
- People have been here for generations and now they cannot afford to live here. This is a social emotional aspect that we have to address when we talk about housing security. We need to focus more on children and families.
- As much as we need affordable housing and jobs, we need wrap around services.
- Grocery stores are too far away and hard to reach by public transportation.
- It is hard to get back and forth to Beacon.
- There is lots of turnover in the City of Newburgh.
- It is hard to get to employment opportunities through public transportation.
- There is no major corporate employer.
- There is not too much of a chance of people breaking into middle class, so you have to provide working class housing.
- We have to grapple with the legacy of urban renewal and segregation.
- Redlining is still happening and still going on.
- There is straight up discrimination in housing.
- Landlords refuse to rent to a single mother with low income.