

Sherman Housing Commission

January 30, 2012

Minutes

Present: John O'Connor, Steve Roffwarg, Catharine Cooke, Michelle Hansen, Jeanette Perlman. Clerk, Lynne Gomez. Visiting member of public: Kate McConaghy.

Minutes of November 14 were approved as read.

A motion was made to enable Kate to participate in discussion based on being an ex-officio member of the commission from the start. Unanimous approval.

Steve reported that the STEAP grant was denied. He reported that David Berto was willing to show First Selectman Cope some housing for seniors in Salisbury and Roxbury. Discussion ensued.

Steve reported that Leslie Higgins-Biddle of the Local Initiative Support Corporation suggested that funds might be available from her organization if intent was clearly demonstrated.

The survey of the proposed land could cost up to \$12,000.00. Jeanette noted that the funding would not come from the town. It was noted, as in past discussions, that a survey of the town-owned land would be beneficial regardless of the use of the property.

Jeanette made a point that the housing proposed is "housing for seniors that has HUD as part of its funding." It is not, and should not be referred to, as HUD Housing. It is affordable senior housing. Jeanette encouraged the commission to re-direct its language. She also noted that "affordable" in this community is not cheap housing. Affordable senior housing exists in Greenwich, Darien, Stanford and other wealthy communities. Jeanette strongly recommended that the commission "very clearly direct our language so that it states: Senior Housing that is Affordable."

Catharine suggested that a presentation to the Board of Selectmen include examples of the factual need for such housing and a good presentation. Emphasis would also be made on the 2-prong approach to Senior Housing that is affordable. By 2-prong, the commission has stated the need to consider both new housing and re-purposed existing outbuildings in its quest for outstanding senior housing that is affordable. Jeanette suggested that this educational effort be put forth in tandem with weekly newspaper articles. She reiterated that if the Sherman Housing Commission does not proceed, a developer could come in with a plan that has no bearing on the will of the town. The

state mandate is to provide affordable housing as part of the housing mix in any community.

Kate questioned whether the commission had considered doing a presentation to the public directly. Discussion followed. Commissioners decided to meet with the Commission on Aging, brainstorm a presentation for the public that would include hand-outs, visuals and audience participation from Sherman residents who might benefit from the proposed housing. It was proposed this educational presentation might be held at the JCC.

The next meeting will be held either on Feb. 27 or March 5. Steve will contact David Berto, the consultant, and Leslie Higgins-Biddle, to determine which date is best. He will also invite John Jenner and Beth Trott from the Commission on Aging.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.