

Sherman Housing Commission

Minutes

April 23, 2012

Present: Steve Roffwarg, Michele Hansen, John O'Connor, Catharine Cooke, Jeanette Perlman, Carol Voorhees, John Jenner, Jill Finch, Beth Trott. First Selectman Clay Cope. Two members of the public.

Minutes: Minutes of the March 26 meeting were approved as read. Motion placed by Catharine, seconded by Jeanette Perlman. Unanimous.

June 9 Housing Forum: The purpose of the April 23 meeting was primarily to plan details of the June 9 Housing Forum. Steve discussed the recent Housing Forum in New Fairfield and distributed a follow-up evaluation form and program.

Visual Media: Beth will seek a student volunteer to video tape and interview some Sherman Seniors who have moved out of town because they could no longer afford to live in town. Beth will provide a list of people for possible interview. Michele and Catharine will work on a slide presentation showing existing examples of the type of housing suitable for Sherman.

Publicity: Jill Finch will head this subcommittee. She will discuss with Citizen News the price of inserting a flier into the paper. The date: 2 weeks prior to event. Perhaps a flier reminder the Wednesday before the Forum. Beth Trott will look into purchase or borrow a "sandwich" board, which would have interchangeable letters. This notice could be put outside the school. Jeanette P. and Steve will work on articles for the Citizen News.

Refreshments: Coffee, cookies and cake are on tap for the Forum. Cheryl Hawkins, a member of the Commission on Aging, will procure items. Carol Voorhees will assist in set up at the Forum. Decision: Hold off on refreshments until a mid-morning break.

Set up of Cafeteria: Beth drew a schematic of the chair and table set up for the Forum. A mike and podium will be procured from the School. Lynne will discuss with School the needs of the Forum.

Speakers: Lesley Higgins-Biddle of LISC, David Berto of Housing Enterprises, and the Bachrach's, a couple who run a non-profit housing corporation. Jeanette and Steve will introduce speakers.

Order of events: Someone needs to plan the order of events and the program for the Forum.

Architect Rendering: David Berto will have some schematics of examples of affordable senior housing. Plan: at May meeting, David will present the commission the schematics

proposed for the Forum. Emphasis: This is NOT what is being proposed, but what is possible. Emphasis #2: Until site control is procured, “we have nothing.” Discussion of the proposed site ensued. Sidebar discussion of housing in Bethel for autistic adults which completely blends into the existing community, such that no one would know that it is housing for special needs residents. John Jenner noted that this discussion would go a long way to ease the minds of Sherman residents, that housing will blend in completely with Sherman existing housing.

Discussion of NIMBY phenomenon – Not In My Back Yard – and the stats that defy this notion. Discussion of neighboring towns which have affordable senior housing, including Washington, Roxbury, New Milford, Kent, New Preston, and Brookfield. Jeanette noted that statistically, there are two types of people who move into senior housing: those who currently live in town and senior relatives of people who live in town. Discussion followed on who qualifies for senior housing that is affordable. John Jenner noted that the proposal is such that makes it attractive to private developers in the future if there is a need or want to provide housing for people at higher income levels.

Discussion followed on the market trend of seniors opting for rental properties. Catharine proposed that the slide show address the need, stats, and facts of Sherman’s bid for senior housing that is affordable.

Other topics: Jill Finch will be prepared to discuss emergency access to Sherman’s isolated homes. Someone will address the vitality and importance to town of Sherman’s seniors. Discussion ensued on people’s perceptions vs reality of Sherman’s seniors and needs.

Steve reviewed the basic process as the Housing Commission goes forward.

Next meeting: May 21, 6 p.m. in the School Cafeteria.

Motion to adjourn at 7:30.

Submitted,

Lynne Gomez
Clerk