

Sherman Housing Commission

Monday, Feb. 18, 2013
6 p.m. Old Town Hall

Present: Steve Roffwarg, Chair. Jeanette Perlman, John O'Connor, Charlie Reppenhagen, Michelle Hansen. David Berto, Consultant. Lynne Gomez, clerk.

Guests: Chris Jellen, Andrea O'Connor, David Hopkins, Tom Zinn, Ron Cooper, Paul Hiro, Barbara Ackerman, Paul S., Carol Faure, Jill Finch.

Paul Hiro presented an update on the recreation easement. He reported that he got an OK from the VP of Iroquois on the zone line, option 6. Commissioners need to file this new information with town and get a new deed in the land record. The BOS needs to vote to accept the new map and have it filed in the land records. Selectman O'Connor noted that Option 6 could be voted on at the Feb. 28 meeting.

This move allows the Housing Commission to finalize the Iroquois easement concern. David Berto recommended that the deed be prepared and note the map.

Discussion ensued on the fact that the land in question includes land in both Zone B and Zone C. Ron Cooper noted that the current town zoning does not have provisions for multi-family usage.

Paul Syscmanski reported again that his survey found well-drained soil largely absent of ledge. The question was raised about access points. Alternatives included access from Cedar Lane or access from the gravel area near the playing fields. This alternative would require minimal site work. Optimal development areas were discussed. It was noted that the balance must be struck between having respect for current uses and existing old trees. Syscmanski noted that the balance between the proposed housing and current recreation activities can be done. He suggested that two-level units might be a possibility to take advantage of the existing topography.

Steve suggested that the commission begin a dialogue with the planning and zoning and wetlands and other agency members, many of whom were in the audience. The goal is site control and a referendum in May. Steve reiterated that the affordable senior housing project would be paid for by state and federal funding put aside for such housing. Steve noted that it is not a project for which the commission or the town would ask for Sherman taxpayer monies. The vote would be to give the 501C-3 (which has yet to be created) permission to lease property for a specific amount of time to attempt to raise federal and state money to finance the project.

Steve said the commission wants to know the concerns of the various town boards toward this goal. He added that the commission strives for complete transparency and wants to establish a forthright working relationship with all the town commissions and boards.

David Hopkins from Planning and Zoning responded that at this point, there is not a regulation that covers what is proposed. He said now is the time to figure out what that regulation would be and to get the process going. If that is the case and the intent of the commission, David said is fine with that.

Discussion followed on the realities of Zone B and Zone C and other zoning issues. The Housing Commission decided to meet at the first Thursday of March with zoning for an informal discussion of changes to the zoning regulations. Steve noted that nothing can really happen until the commission gets site control.

Steve thanked the members of the various planning and zoning commissions and boards who attended the meeting. Discussion ensued on getting some articles written regarding the new Option 6 deed, the process ahead, and the meeting with Planning and Zoning. Another goal is to get the language of the lease finalized. Selectmen have an annual budget meeting on May 3. The commission would need to get on the agenda 2 weeks in advance. It would have to be warned on April 22 and April 29.

Discussion of the parameters of the lease agreement was discussed. David will email members a list of lease criteria. The commissioners proposed to work on the lease language. The lease would have to go to BOS and town attorney. Then the package would go before the town for a vote, including identifying the land in question and the terms of the lease. One way of looking at the lease agreement is: the 501C-3 which will be developed would want to lease everything on the Murphy tract that is not an easement.

Another topic discussed was the cost of creating the 501C-3. Steve will check with Lesley Higgins-Biddle of LISC to determine how to get the LISC funding to create a 501C-3.

Charlie Repp agreed to visit with one of the architects the commission identified last year to keep dialogue open and touch base on various points.

Brief discussion of zoning included a thought to eliminate Zone B in the area of question. Changing the zoning to C and then changing the regulations in C to allow what is needed in this one case.

Upcoming meetings: Attend Feb. 28 BOS meeting.

Get on agenda for March 7 Planning and Zoning meeting.

March Housing Commission would be March 18 at 6 p.m. at the Senior Center.

Charlie Repp discussed zoning regulations for Newtown Housing for the Elderly at Nanawaug Meadows.

Minutes of the Jan. 21, 2013 meeting was OK'd as read. Steve reported that everyone currently serving on the Housing Commission was reinstated with staggered year term expirations. Motion to Adjourn: 7:30 p.m.

Submitted, Lynne Gomez

