

Sherman Housing Commission

Minutes

Monday, June 17, 2013

Present: Steve Roffwarg, chair. Michelle Hansen, Charlie Reppenhagen, John O'Connor. Lynne Gomez, clerk. Chris Jellen, Selectman.

Minutes were approved as read for the May 13 meeting.

Comments on Lawyer's letters were discussed. Use of the term "elderly housing" was objected to. Never has the Housing Commission used that term. Lawyer also suggested the town "sell" the property to the 501C3. Commission never wanted to do that. The commission has always discussed "leasing" the property from the town.

Steve will take comments from the commissioners and file with David Berto, the consultant, to draft a response prior to the BOS meeting. David will put all the comments together to go to BOS, and copy the lawyer, as a letter from the Housing Commission. We need to correct that in order to go forward, Steve said. Branse, Willis & Knapp, a land use firm, was discussed as an alternate firm to draft the lease language. Charlie Reppenhagen noted that it might be wise to get on board with Branse, Willis & Knapp, as they do work with Planning and Zoning.

Jeanette noted the commission is paying for an attorney who is supposed to be "representing us", and is not. The commission would be better served by an attorney who recognizes what it needs, understands land use law, is well-versed in what goes on with senior housing and who does not come up with controversial issues that would "fly in the face of what we are trying to do."

Charlie agreed. Michelle Hansen suggested that the commission protest the bill from the present attorney. Steve agreed to contact Barbara Ackerman to get her take on an appropriate lawyer. Currently the town lawyer seems to be trying to move the project off track, said Steve. Discussion ensued.

New Entrance and Map

Charlie made a number of proposals regarding entrance to the property of interest. He presented a map of a new entrance plan just south of Church Drive. Charlie met with four members of the commission, including Chris Fazzino. Stan Greenbaum of Park and Rec recommended perhaps go between two monuments off Route 37 and 39. Everyone seemed to like the idea. Charlie talked to Samanski and neighboring property owners at American Pie. Charlie said this entrance is a feasible thing that can be done and the property owners are on board with it. Charlie said he'd like to get the map to whoever will be writing the proposal letter.

Charlie said the right of way will be for the purpose of passing and re-passing to the premises through the remaining land owned by the town of Sherman known as "Colonial Field." The commission can give specifics to the entrance so that it is not just a vague 50 ft right of way through the soccer fields, gardens, etc., but it is clearly separate and defined. It is a clear right of way with 78 ft on one side and 50 ft on the other along the stonewall of the property.

John suggested that the highway department of the state should be consulted to determine feasibility. He reminded the commission of the difficulty in getting other access ways secured. Charlie will talk to Semanski and try to find someone from the highway department in Hartford. He agreed to "stay on this thing."

Charlie will send the map to whatever lawyer the commission settles on. This entranceway will avoid the whole issue of impacting the gardens, soccer fields, trails, etc.

Charlie noted that Cedar Lane option would require blasting and result in a twisting, windy roadway. Jeanette noted that the main focus on access was to be able to get the senior van and ambulance, etc., into the property. Charlie noted that we should bring all the utilities off Cedar Lane underground, but not have a driveway there.

Timeline

If the Commission switches to Branse, Willis & Knapp, there will not be enough time to present the project to Selectmen at the June 27 meeting. Discussion ensued on having the town attorney re-write the letter. However, other commissioners said the town attorney is not the right attorney for the job. Selectman O'Connor will be away from town June 29 through most of July. The commission will try for the August BOS meeting to get the language of the lease approved. The town meeting could be set. A referendum on the lease agreement could go before voters in late August. Discussion ensued.

8-24

The commission still needs to acquire an 8-24, which is a document required whenever town-owned land is proposed for use. It needs to come from the selectman's office. The planning commission, when they get a request for an 8-24, can hold a public hearing before making a decision. Steve will discuss with Barbara. Following some discussion, Steve noted the need to have approved 8-24 in hand at Aug. 1 meeting of Planning and Zoning. Can it be available at the June 27 BOS meeting? Steve will find out.

Senior Petition

Discussion ensued on a grassroots petition created by seniors at the Senior Center. The seniors also sent questions to the Housing Commission they hope will get answered. Discussion ensued on a Waiting List, generated at the Senior Center in response to people who have come through the front door and wanted to be on a wait list.

Waiting list discussion ensued. Determined that there is NO official waiting list. John noted that the current list of names is not recognized by the Housing Commission. He said there is no waiting list. Jeanette said the funding sources expect to have waiting lists as part of their documentations determining interest. Name of the “waiting list” will be changed to “document expressing interest.”

Next Meeting: July 15, 2013 at the Senior Center at 5:30 pm

Motion to Adjourn: 6:45 pm

Submitted:

Lynne Gomez
Clerk