

Sherman Housing Commission

Feb. 24, 2014

Minutes

Present: Steve Roffwarg, chair. Jeanette Perlman, Charlie Reppenhagen, John O'Connor, Michelle Hansen.

Update: Steve reported that it has been 3 weeks since he met with First Selectman Clay Cope, Attorney Seinkowitz, and David Berto to review the lease. The entire package was available at the meeting. Changes were made to the lease and Housing is happy with the lease. BOS will bring up the lease at the meeting on Thursday. It has been available for selectmen to review.

Current lease differs only from the former copy in terms of allowing the housing trust to solicit funding for the project. Current lease has more flexibility and is more friendly toward potential investors. Discussion followed on funding and insurance on the property.

Subsequent action of the Housing Commission depends on when and if the BOS accepts the lease and moves to have it come to a vote. Discussion centered on the chances of the lease being accepted this week by BOS.

The commission reviewed the lease language which referred to page 3 of the Feb. 17 letter from Seinkowitz. The letter read, in part: "I see the resubmission to Planning and Zoning is a mere house keeping item, that can be handled pretty much simultaneously with the referral to town meeting. You must remain sensitive to the statutory 35 day period that is allowed to the planning and zoning for consideration." The attorney also spoke about giving the townspeople more time to read and review the lease. It would be posted in town hall.

Discussion followed regarding the pending schedule of days. There is a specific number of days allowed for review by Planning and Zoning, for review by townspeople, and allotted prior to the town meeting, etc.

Revised entrance and exit plans will need to be presented to Planning and Zoning. The commissioners planned to bring all the documents to the BOS meeting on Thursday.

Steve reviewed the timeframe and work to be done once BOS accepts the lease. He noted newspaper articles, public presentations, Democratic and Republican monthly meetings and the speakers panel. When the project goes to town meeting, David Berto and Lesley Higgins Biddle will be asked to attend. John O'Connor recommended that seniors in town who have expressed interest in senior housing could sign a letter.

In addition, vignettes of seniors who hope to continue to live in Sherman could be published in local and regional media. Fliers could also be produced and distributed. Steve noted that this may have to happen quickly. Several newspapers were discussed, including the Litchfield County Times.

The architectural renderings could be posted at the meeting and a map of the property. Getting site control of the property is the first step to getting pre-development funding which would finance the actual renderings of the actual Sherman project. Steve reiterated that taxpayer money will not be used.

Jeanette noted that it will not become a taxpayer burden because it will not be owned by the town. The language of the lease specifically states that it will not become a taxpayer burden. Maintenance of the property is the responsibility of the management company. It is not the problem of Sherman.

Discussion followed on perceptions in town and how to clarify fact from fiction, regarding the project. Charlie Reppenhagen noted that these projects are up and running in the region and they are running well.

Clarification needs to be made for voters, regarding language: Sherman Housing Trust, management companies, 501c3s, the trust's board, eligible residents of the project, etc.

The Housing Trust board can be made up of the members of the Sherman Housing Commission members, however, you cannot serve on both. Whether the Housing Commission remains in existence is at the discretion of the BOS.

Board of Selectmen: Need to make decision on moving the lease vote forward to a town vote. Discussion followed on the possible date of the Town Meeting and any other topics that may arise.

Motion to adjourn.

Next meeting: March 17, 2014 at 5:30 pm at the Senior Center.

Submitted,

Lynne Gomez
Clerk