

April 13, 2009

Present: Liddy Adams, Wayne Hileman, Andy O'Hazo, Jean Suddaby, Sue Werkhoven

Guests: Peter Talbot, Martine Kolletti

Visitors: Residents

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Housing Commission was called to order at 5:05 pm by Chairman Wayne Hileman.

Minutes of March 9 Regular Meeting

Wayne Hileman moved to accept the minutes as submitted. Andy O'Hazo seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Inclusion of Items Not on Agenda

Chairman Wayne Hileman moved to make the following agenda changes:

- a) add Peter Talbot to the last item under Updates, including the letter sent by Peter to the Housing Commission
- b) move a letter from Concerned Citizens to Item Five, Communications
- c) delete Item 6, Q & A with WCHT representatives, because they notified the Housing Commission Saturday evening that they were not able to attend.

Sue Werkhoven seconded these motions, which were approved unanimously.

Item Four- Pond View Estates

Housing Commission members were informed by Wayne Hileman that, at the April 8 Town Hall meeting, voters approved buying the property that lies between Route 202 and Flirtation Avenue, with the condition that an environmental study be done. Therefore, the Housing Commission will no longer be monitoring this project.

Item Four – Wykeham Rise and a “Few Good Acres”

There has been nothing new to report on these topics.

Item Four – 16 Titus Road

Wayne Hileman will be contacting the Selectmen to give them official notice that the State has pulled the funding for any new Incentive Housing Zone applications. He recommended that the Housing Commission continue to gather information on various options for this town-owned property.

Guest Peter Talbot gave a presentation on his ideas for developing the Titus Road parcel. He brought with him Martine Kolletti, a LEED certified consultant. Peter, in 1995, did a report for the town on this property. Also, those involved in the Depot Study had included ideas for this site's development. Peter was interested in learning what the Housing Commission was finding out about the town's future housing needs and what ideas he could offer to help meet these. He showed schematics that had several options, all of which were guided by a sustainable-growth- community rubric. One of its criteria was reduced vehicular traffic with an emphasis on walk-ability and bike paths. Martine explained that everything should be done ecologically, which included LEED standards applied to the buildings. These standards were becoming more and more part of building codes throughout the country. Peter suggested that they explore the kinds of funding that might be available for LEED developed projects. (LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Peter thanked Wayne for his thoughtful response to Peter's letter.

Wayne Hileman believed that the Housing Commission has been interested in ideas similar to those expressed in Peter and Martine's presentation. The members have focused on preserving the area along the river and recreating the natural flora that had once been there. Also consideration has been given to a possible mix of residences and light businesses, such as a yoga center or small bakery. Wayne Hileman thanked Peter and Martine for sharing their expertise with the Housing Commission.

Concerned Citizens' Letter

Wayne Hileman read the letter, with 62 signatures attached, from Concerned Citizens for Affordable Housing. At issue was the request made at the Housing Commission's March 9, 2009 meeting by WCHT representatives, Mr. Whitney and Mr. Berto, for \$150000 of Housing Commission funds to initiate a development for an affordable housing community. This community would be named 'Marbledale Meadows', formerly known as 'Myfield'. (A copy of this letter is on file in the Town Clerk's Office)

Wayne Hileman summarized what had transpired after this request had been made. He had sent an email to the WCHT outlining some questions and concerns. After some email exchanges, Wayne compiled a list of question which he emailed on March 19 to the WCHT, who offered to have some of its representative's respond to these questions at the Monday, April 13 regular Housing Commission meeting. However, Wayne was notified the evening of Saturday, March 11, by David Berto and Dick Sears, that they needed more time to respond to these questions and wanted to postpone their appearance until the Housing Commission's May meeting. (See list of questions at end of minutes.)

Wayne Hileman invited public comment. Questions included unease about the traffic impact the Marbledale Meadows project could have on Mygatt Road because there are already 43 residences on it. Also, there was some feeling expressed about clustering those in affordable housing altogether instead of scattering them throughout the community.

Wayne Hileman said the WCHT has yet to show that their proposal can be accomplished. The Housing Commission is waiting for the response to its questions before it can determine what the next step might be.

Adjourn

Wayne Hileman moved to adjourn the meeting. Liddy Adams seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10pm.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be on Monday, May 11, 2009, in the Land Use Room at Town Hall. Respectfully submitted,

Patte Doran
Secretary

Housing Commission Questions for the WCHT

1. How much will the WCHT pay to acquire the property?
2. How much \$\$\$ does the WCHT have at risk to date? How much will you put at risk in total?
3. Did you pass on the 2 existing houses or did Myfield refuse to put them in the deal?
4. If you gain approval for the \$150K, how soon until you're ready to apply for the state grant?
5. How do you get to a total project cost of \$3.1 million?
6. How many 1bd, 2bd & 3bd units do you envision? Will some of these be 1-level?
7. Are you considering stick-frame or modular construction?
8. What is the specific grant for which you are applying? If this does not work out, are there others you can apply for? Can you apply for more than one at a time?
9. Since the Myfield guys are direct beneficiaries of your good will, why don't they at least partially fund the pre-development costs? Are they 'made whole' in this buyout?
10. In the last project that involved state money (Dodge Farm) the Trust was able to pay back the up-front money to the town. Has anyone revisited that deal to see if there are lessons to be learned?

Questions since the DECD moratorium:

1. Do you know what prompted their decision? What is the effective date? What assurances, if any,

have they given that things will be 'business as usual' after 6 months?

2. Does the fact that they specifically mentioned 'home ownership' proposals imply that rental projects are still in play?

3. Can the Trust find any other sources of funding to move the project forward, or is state \$\$\$ the only way to make this happen?