

October 5, 2009

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

Guests: Peter Talbot, Martin Brown

Visitors: Members of the Washington Community Housing Trust, residents of Quarry Ridge, other town residents, Press (Voices, LCT).

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Housing Commission was called to order at 5:00 pm by Chairman Wayne Hileman.

Minutes of September 14, 2009 Regular Meeting

Wayne Hileman moved to accept the minutes as submitted.

Liddy Adams seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Presentation of Titus Road Proposal

Peter Talbot, AIA Architects, gave the Housing Commission a detailed written draft describing his *Mill Race Road: A Civic Sustainability Project*. The accompanying letter asked for the Housing Commission's thoughts and input on this "preliminary town planning concept that would incorporate 16 Titus Road into a neighborhood expansion of the village center". The area involved would be approximately 11 plus acres including the 4 plus acres where the former Town Garage was situated. In his presentation, Peter proposed several possibilities for this area, all of which would protect the environment while contributing to the Depot's revitalization. Aspects of the options were displayed on large poster boards for the Housing Commission to view. The key concept underlying these options was the creation of a new secondary street that would run parallel to Titus Road and would be tentatively named Mill Race Road. Some of the other concepts presented were those of added commercial space, mixed age and income homes, a cultural/community center, and infrastructure upgrades.

If this report met the general approval of the Housing Commission, Mr. Talbot requested in his letter that the Housing Commission write a letter of support that he could take to the Board of Selectmen. Wayne Hileman told Mr. Talbot that the Housing Commission would be very interested in taking a closer look at his report. Jean Suddaby said she felt that members would love to take a walk of the area with Mr. Talbot in order to visualize his proposal more fully.

Request for Funds - WCHT

(Liddy Adams recused herself from this portion of the meeting as she is also a member of the WCHT)

Chairman Wayne Hileman made a motion to recommend to the Board of Selectmen an expenditure of \$110,000 from the Town's Affordable Housing Fund to the Washington Community Housing Trust for pre-development costs associated with the acquisition, development and implementation of Marbledale Meadows, 7 Mygatt Road.

Sue Werkhoven seconded the motion.

Wayne Hileman then told members the motion was now open for discussion. He referenced the September 14, 2009 packet the Housing Commission had received from the WCHT as well as answers to follow-up questions from the Housing Commission received by email on October 2, 2009.

In general the members were impressed with the site plan and drawings, though Andy O'Hazo wasn't clear about the maintenance costs for this project's road. Wayne Hileman thought that, as this was a private road, the costs would be shared by the Homeowners' Association. Also, since not only the road but also the septic and the utilities were already in, this could be termed a 'shovel-ready' project. Wayne had some concern about the creation of more 2-story/2-bedroom houses, since the ones already there had still not been sold.

All thought the WCHT had made a strong case for the housing benefits that the project would bring to the town. Wayne stated that the WCHT had established a good track record over the years. Members reiterated their faith in the dedication and commitment of the WCHT. Wayne said he could see the evidence of their success in Riverwoods, Washington's Affordable Senior Housing, which he can see from his back yard. Sue Werkhoven said she can see the success of Dodge Farms' affordable units from her home.

However, Wayne Hileman felt that the financial aspect of the proposal gave him pause. He had some trouble "following the money," particularly when it came to how the Trust would buy the site. Andy O'Hazo said he felt the project could fall apart at any of the stages along the way. Jean Suddaby had concerns over whether the Town money would ultimately lead to a project; she had spoken informally to Dick Sears about whether there was any way for the WCHT to reimburse the Housing Commission should the project fall through (Mr. Sears said there was not). Sue Werkhoven voiced her support, saying that it was time for this site to be dealt with and she had faith in the WCHT.

Wayne Hileman said that for him the crucial issue was assessing the likelihood of state funding. Without it there would be no project and the Town would have nothing to show for its investment. He had investigated the grant money available from the State. There were 18 applications pending for the 12 million dollars available for 2009. He said what with the State's current economic crisis and the fact that the State had already called one moratorium on this type of funding, he was concerned about the amount being asked for (1 million dollars) and the risk involved. He had asked the DECD whether the Housing Commission could make a conditional commitment and was told yes.

After the members were finished with their discussions Wayne Hileman then asked members from the WCHT for comment. They felt they had an excellent shot at getting their application approved and gave their reasons to support this supposition. They supplied some additional info from conversations they had with the DECD. They stated that a conditional approval was an option they could not pursue.

Wayne Hileman then re-read the motion (see above) and asked for a vote. Jean Suddaby, Andy O'Hazo, and Wayne Hileman voted no. Sue Werkhoven voted yes (Liddy Adams did not vote, having been recused).

The motion was defeated.

Executive Session

Liddy Adams was re-seated.

Wayne Hileman made a motion to go into executive session at 6:40 pm to discuss a potential municipal property transaction.

Sue Werkhoven seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Wayne Hileman made a motion to come out of executive session at 6:55 pm.

Andy O'Hazo seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Adjourn

Wayne Hileman moved to adjourn the meeting.

Andy O'Hazo seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7 pm.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be on Monday, November 9, 2009, in the Land Use Room at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Patte Doran
Secretary