

April 9, 2007

Present: Don Brigham, Wayne Hileman, Jean Suddaby, Sue Werkhoven

Guests: None

Visitors: None

Call to Order

Chairman Wayne Hileman called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

Minutes of March 12

Sue Werkhoven moved to accept the minutes as submitted. Jean Suddaby seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Updates

A. In the 2007/08 Budget request, Wayne Hileman included the cost of secretarial payments.

B. Wayne Hileman has spoken with the town attorney and there should be drafts ready soon on the wording of the deed restrictions regarding some of the Ellsworth apartments and the Starberry Farm rental cottage.

Wayne Hileman also has discussed with Dan Scherr, who is on the Open Space committee, the concept of a local tax abatement for residents who voluntarily deed restrict an accessory unit or donate a conservation easement. However, there is no enabling legislation from Hartford that allows a town to craft such an ordinance.

C. Wayne Hileman has the Housing Commission's article ready for the Town's spring newsletter.

Senior Housing Survey

Discussion occurred on how to best incorporate the written comments from the Senior Survey into the final report. Wayne Hileman said the report needed to make clear which comments were completely positive or completely negative and which ones were qualified. Comments could also be woven into the summaries of the key findings gleaned from the survey. One of these key findings was a need for senior housing choices. Senior citizens emphasized choice more than affordability, with options such as availability of rentals, condos, and congregate living. This finding suggests that zoning requirements need to be analyzed, such as lifting the moratorium on condominiums or being open to evaluating these options as they come along. Such decisions also entail discussion of where such options would be located. The Housing Commission members expressed their support that the three housing options above are given high priority for the town and that these be put near or within village center(s). Wayne Hileman said he would work on the wording of the report's findings and recommendations for the members.

Other Business

Each Town Commission has been asked to comment on the Depot Study from its particular perspective. Don Brigham would like to meet with the other commissions to discuss approaches to implementing various parts of the Depot Study. He personally would like to see the less complex ideas be addressed first, such as diagonal parking, traffic patterns, and the river loop walk. He also felt that more flexibility in zoning regulations for the village centers would allow developers to address the housing options that the Senior Survey showed were wanted. Under appropriate guidelines, the private sector could do this on a market rate basis. He also recommended that the Housing Commission gather more data on housing, including a review of affordable housing alternatives and a forecast of the ability of Washington to eventually meet the requirement of 10% affordable housing stock. Members then discussed how the Housing Commission funds could be most judiciously used. If a group or individual approached the Housing Commission with a worthwhile project, the Commission could contribute some of its funds contingent on approvals from zoning, and so forth, as well as on a vote at a town

meeting. Therefore, no money is ever actually allocated until the proposal has met all the various commission requirements and approval has been given at a town meeting.

Andersen Proposal

Wayne Hileman has given his written reactions to Valerie Andersen's suggestions for an additional approach to addressing Washington's affordable housing needs. He has shared these reactions with both Valerie Andersen and the Housing Commission members. He felt that the pros and cons of her proposal could be more fully examined. Don Brigham suggested that Valerie Andersen might be willing to refine her proposal with more specifics and data.

Meeting Time

This item has been tabled for a future meeting.

Adjournment

Wayne Hileman moved to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Jean Suddaby. The meeting adjourned at 6:50.

The next scheduled meeting is Monday, May 14, at 5:00 p.m. in the Land Use Room, Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Patte Doran