

December 10, 2007

Present: Liddy Adams, Don Bringham, Wayne Hileman, Jean Suddaby, Sue Werkhoven

Guests: Stephen Kiss, Joe Gitterman

Visitors: Valerie Friedman, Frank Adams, Rod Wyant, Chris Charles

Call to Order

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

Minutes of October 15

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

Myfield, LLC

Joe Gitterman presented a large rendering of the Myfield Project's redesign, seeking feedback from the Housing Commission. Joe took the considerable input from neighbors and others into account when doing this redesign. After thanking Chris Charles for his assistance with the redesign, Joe reiterated his goals for this project, namely: remaining loyal to the Town Plan of Conservation and Development and broadening the housing options available to the townspeople, while breaking even financially.

Joe described how the two houses facing the road are now further apart to create a 'street sense' and a more aesthetic entrance way, thus breaking up the former row-like monotony of the structures. There are still thirteen structures but three of the houses will each have two one-bedroom apartments (condos). Of the six 900 square foot condos, two are affordable. Of the ten two-bedroom houses, three are affordable.

The Washington Housing Trust will screen and choose applicants for the affordable units. The affordable units will increase Washington's affordable housing unit equivalent point total by approximately 10 points.

WVD - Stephen Kiss

Stephen Kiss described the establishment of his new non-profit organization, The Washington Low and Moderate Income Volunteer Housing Committee (WVC). Its purpose is to create and facilitate ongoing fund raising activities to assist low and moderate income families with down payments for purchasing homes in Washington, CT. Stephen hopes to work closely with the WHT (Washington Housing Trust) and the Housing Commission.

Don Bringham felt that, with land values so high in Washington, middle class families were falling between the cracks in their ability to purchase houses here at their market value. Sue Werkhoven asked Stephen Kiss where his idea had come from. Stephen said it originated at the Lion's Club. Valerie Friedman felt that Stephen should consider donating funds raised to the WHT, an organization already in place. Wayne Hileman thought it might be helpful if Stephen explored the idea of a 501C3 status. Wayne will email Stephen information about this.

For further information on the WVC, email: **WVC.Housing@yahoo.com**.

Updates

A. Senior Housing Visit to Woodbury

Jean Suddaby said it was always informative to get a variety of ideas about housing types and floor plans. Sue Werkhoven said there were more out-of-towners in the housing they visited compared to our Senior Survey. In the latter, seniors already living in Washington want to find stay in town. Liddy Adams thought older people wanted to find comfortable, safe housing with ways to get to work if they weren't retired.

B. Zoning Commission/Accessory Apartments

Wayne Hileman attended the last Zoning Commission's meeting, where he spoke for himself, not on the Housing Commission's behalf. He felt restricting accessory apartments to either an attached or an unattached unit instead of allowing one of each type reduced the town's variety of housing options. Many of these accessory units provide dwellings that are affordable, even if not counted as such. Don Brigham said the Council of Small Towns is working on the idea of allowing market rate accessory housing to be included in the affordable housing count. Chris Charles felt this would be a stop-gap measure, since it still didn't help families become home owners. Wayne Hileman felt that the availability of accessory apartments didn't preclude the need for family-owned, affordable homes. Rather, accessory apartments enhanced the spectrum of housing options for those who did not want to own a home.

Wayne Hileman thought all the Commissions could draft letters regarding their positions of this issue, and then they could meet to share their ideas.

C. Re-appointment of Commission Members

Wayne Hileman thanked Liddy Adams and Don Brigham for their service to the Housing Commission and for being willing to be re-appointed for another term. Wayne has written to the Selectmen, who make these appointments.

D. Meeting Dates for 2008

Liddy Adams moved to accept the 2008 meeting dates and Sue Werkhoven seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

For 2008, October 13 is Columbus Day, so the meeting date has been changed to October 6.

E. LISC - Housing Connections of CT

Wayne Hileman met with Lesley Higgins-Biddle, the Senior Program Officer of Connecticut's Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). Wayne was gratified to find that LISC's focus is on housing solutions for small communities. Wayne felt that this organization could be a good future resource for the Housing Commission. It offers technical expertise to local organizations to help them develop affordable housing solutions that will enhance their communities. The LISC includes resources in the areas of finance and investment, regulatory requirements, and facilitation of a unified housing vision for communities.

LISC can be contacted at: housingconnect@lisc.org

Liddy Adams informed members that the Housing Commission has been invited for a field trip by a retired friend of hers who is interested in Kent's limited equity housing. The Housing Commission would be able to visit various units and ask tenants questions. Liddy will set up a convenient date and time.

Long Range Housing Plan

Wayne Hileman distributed a rough outline of the Housing Commission's long range plan which includes the gathering of data in order to examine demographics on housing configurations from the past and present so as to evaluate implications for the future.

Adjournment

Wayne Hileman moved to adjourn the meeting. Sue Werkhoven seconded the motion which was carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Patte Doran