

## April 10, 2006

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

**Visitors:** Valerie Andersen; Sydney Schwartz, Republican American reporter; Dick Sears, First Selectman

**Guests:** Chris Charles

**Call to Order:** Chairman Wayne Hileman called the meeting to order at 5 p.m.

**Minutes of March 6, 2006, Meeting:** Minutes were amended as follows: Paragraph four, Sentence three should read: "the former has 7 units and the latter has 6 units". The minutes were approved unanimously as amended.

The Housing Commission invited Chris Charles to speak about the status of the Myfield Project. The present configuration is for 13 two-bedroom, two story homes, each approximately 1900 square feet, with two car garages. The houses are modular so that the buyer can adjust the floor plan within the base unit. Also, each house would have a side yard.

Liddy Adams asked if there would be deed restrictions on common areas. Chris Charles said there would be the typical condominium association arrangements. He went on to explain that four houses would qualify as affordable, with two available at 80 percent of the median income and two at 60 percent of the median income.

Don Brigham asked about the comparability concept and whether the project has met the statutes. Chris Charles felt the answer to be in the affirmative. Also, he felt one of this configuration's merits is that it allows for stricter oversight of the open space.

Valerie Andersen asked how these affordable units would contribute to the tally. Chris Charles described how different points are assigned depending on whether potential buyers qualify at 80 or 60 percent of the median income. Given this proviso, these units could generate approximately 8 1/4 points.

Valerie Andersen asked where Washington was at regarding points. Wayne Hileman said the town was at 48.5 points not including Ellsworth. He said the goal was to get to 75 points and reminded members that a moratorium only protected the town from developments that are over 40 units. Chris Charles felt it was important for the town to stay in a position where it has a say in how developments are constructed.

Wayne Hileman asked how the affordable units would handle the common charges, especially as maintenance costs rose. Dick Sears said other similar groups have worked such matters out. For example, the affordable units could have the leeway to do their own snow plowing and so forth.

The Washington Housing Trust has been approached to act as the Affordability Administrator for the Myfield Project so there would be an entity experienced with such matters as protecting applicants' privacy. Valerie Andersen inquired about making the affordable units as rentals, which might make it easier to oversee equity issues. However, both the Washington Housing Trust and the Zoning Commission have a preference for stand-alone houses. Dick Sears said the DECD insures that homes designated as affordable meet the appropriate criteria. Also, information is available from similar projects already built in other towns. Jean Suddaby asked what the affordable units would sell for. Chris Charles felt it would depend on where interest rates go but currently it looks like approximately \$160000 for two units and \$120000 for two units.

Valerie Andersen said she felt reassured with the expertise around the table and the intelligent approach being taken regarding housing issues.

The meeting then moved on to **Agenda Item Five: Review of the letter to 1st Congregational Church regarding Ellsworth and Woodruff**. Wayne Hileman handed out a draft of the letter. Revisions were made and accepted unanimously. This letter could be used as a template for making

future contacts with appropriate parties.

The members discussed how units that were part of compensation package, such as a church sexton's apartment, might be considered as affordable housing. Or, for example, if there were six faculty apartments, three could be designated as affordable, giving the flexibility to change the status of specific units yearly. Wayne Hileman informed members that a Washington homeowner has expressed an interest in deed restricting his caretaker cottage so it could count as affordable. But owners can feel awkward about inquiring into a potential tenant's finances. Liddy Adams felt that the Washington Housing Trust might be interested in acting as Management Agent in these situations. Also, the idea of possible incentives to support such intentions was explored. The members expressed a need to meet periodically with the Washington Housing Trust so as to more fully support its efforts.

A memo to the Board of Selectman regarding a request for \$50000 for the 2006/2007 budget was distributed. This sum would go into the capital part of the budget but would be designated for housing-related matters. Liddy Adams said the Board of Finance would want to see a plan with specifics for the use of this money.

Considering **Agenda Item Seven, the Depot Study**, Don Brigham felt that the implementation of senior housing was a lynch pin in its design. He delineated three categories for approaching the Depot Study: To do; Maybe to do; and What not to do. He'd eliminate the ideas of parallel parking on Route 109 and moving River Road. Items on his 'to do' list would include enhancing recreational facilities and rebuilding the bridge to the Senior Center.

Jean Suddaby reported that she has been given a draft of a questionnaire being developed by Dick Sears and Pam Collins for the purpose of gathering information about the needs of Washington's elderly. Jean Suddaby also described her visits to various types of elderly housing, including congregant, assisted living, and life care facilities. She explained the array of costs and services connected with these different kinds of facilities.

Jean Suddaby moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Liddy Adams. Adjournment was at 6:50 p.m.

**The next scheduled meeting is May 8, 2006, at 5 p.m. in the Land Use Room, Town Hall.**

Respectfully submitted,

Patte Doran