

# Town of Washington Special Town Meeting

Bryan Memorial Town Hall on July 11, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

Moderator: Nicholas Solley and Clerk: Sheila Silvernail

## MOTIONS & VOTES

**PRIMARY MOTION:** That the Town of Washington shall approve a grant in an amount not to exceed \$225,000 payable to the Washington Community Housing Trust from the Town of Washington Affordable Housing fund for the purpose of purchasing and developing property at 181 New Milford Turnpike, Assessor's Map 11-1, Lot#1; for the sole purpose of development of three (3) limited equity affordable housing units. Simultaneously with the payment of the grant, the Washington Community Housing Trust and the Town of Washington will sign an agreement to provide as follows:

1. In the event the described property is transferred whole or in part for purposes other than affordable housing as defined by Connecticut General Statute Section 8-30g, the entire grant amount of \$225,000 shall be returned to the Town of Washington Affordable Housing Fund within sixty (60) calendar days of the transfer.
2. The Trust will have six years after receiving the grant to renovate the existing house and build two new houses defined by Connecticut General Statute 8-30g as "affordable" on the Trust's property.
3. After that six-year period, if only one affordable housing unit exists, the Trust will return 66% of the grant to the Town of Washington Affordable Housing Fund.
4. After the six-year period, if only two affordable housing units exist, the Trust will return 33% of the grant to the Town of Washington Affordable Housing Fund.

The agreement to be signed by the Trust and the Town will be recorded in the Washington Land Records.

Proposed by: Mark Lyon  
Seconded by: Mary Anne Greene  
Discussion by: M. Lyon, R. Underwood, W. Whitney, A. Peterson, V. Anderson, M. Gavenas, J. Mustich, K. Cornet, J. Buonaiuto, J. Lodsins, V. Verstandig, L. Peterson, M. Meyers, S. Bishop-Wrabel, E. McCormack, P. Moore, S. Papsin, L. Adams, W. Fowlkes, J. Gauthey, S. Haber.  
Vote: Called by Secondary Motion. 157 paper ballots counted.  
73 in favor, 84 against. Motion fails.

**2<sup>nd</sup> MOTION:** To call the question and bring primary motion to vote.  
Proposed by: Richard Sears  
Seconded by: Susan Haber  
Discussion: Non-debatable  
Vote: By raise of hands, motion passes.

# Town of Washington Special Town Meeting

Bryan Memorial Town Hall on July 11, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

Moderator: Nicholas Solley and Clerk: Sheila Silvernail

## TRANSCRIPT of RECORDING

First Selectman, Mark Lyon, opened with requests for Moderator. Ray Reich nominated Nick Solley with second from Roger Wyant. With no other nominations and positive vote, Nick Solley was duly elected. Sheila Silvernail served as clerk.

N. Solley: Thank you, just a couple of ground rules for tonight. John Gueniat will have. Where's John? There he is. He has the portable mic and because the recording of this meeting only goes through the microphone you must talk into the microphone before speaking. And, and at the same time, give your name and address. It's not quite like the permanent system that, the PA system that we had set up here so if you're in the back of the room and you're speaking not into the microphone, Sheila will not get it and it won't be recorded. First order of business.

Second order of business, I'd like to have Sheila Silvernail, our recording secretary, read the call of the meeting.

Clerk: Warning, Town Of Washington, Connecticut  
Special Town Meeting

The voters and electors of the Town of Washington are hereby warned that a Special Town Meeting will be held on Thursday, July 11, 2013 at 7:30 p.m. at Bryan Memorial Town Hall, Washington Depot, Connecticut to consider and act upon the following:

- 1) To consider and act upon the request of the Washington Community Housing Trust for a grant of \$225,000 from the Affordable Housing Fund to be used for the Vincent Property Project.

Dated this 1<sup>st</sup> day of July, 2013 at Washington, Connecticut.  
Mark E. Lyon, Richard O. Carey, Anthony J. Bedini  
Board of Selectmen

N. Solley: Thank you, Sheila. At this time I'd like Mark Lyon to come up and read the resolution please.

M. Lyon: RESOLVED: That the Town of Washington shall approve a grant in an amount not to exceed \$225,000 payable to the Washington Community Housing Trust from the Town of Washington Affordable Housing fund for the purpose of purchasing and developing property at 181 New Milford Turnpike, Assessor's Map 11-1, Lot#1; for the sole purpose of

development of three (3) limited equity affordable housing units. Simultaneously with the payment of the grant, the Washington Community Housing Trust and the Town of Washington will sign an agreement to provide as follows:

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6. The Trust will have six years after receiving the grant to renovate the existing house and build two new houses defined by Connecticut General Statute 8-30g as “affordable” on the Trust’s property.
7. After that six-year period, if only one affordable housing unit exists, the Trust will return 66% of the grant to the Town of Washington Affordable Housing Fund.
8. After the six-year period, if only two affordable housing units exist, the Trust will return 33% of the grant to the Town of Washington Affordable Housing Fund.

The agreement to be signed by the Trust and the Town will be recorded in the Washington Land Records.

N. Solley: The resolution has been read and proposed. Do I have a second?

M. Greene: Second.

N. Solley: Mary Anne Greene. Before we get into questions and answers and I know Walter Whitney has a statement, it’s warm tonight. Our air conditioning isn’t on. I wish it existed. What I will ask you to do when we get to questions and answers is be succinct, there’s approximately, well there are almost a hundred of you out there and so I want to keep your points to the resolution. Be succinct. If everybody talked for a minute, we’d here for an hour and a half just dealing with questions and answers so I think you get my point. Walter? Oh, I’m sorry, Mark. Mark is going to open with some brief comments.

M. Lyon: I wanted to give a little background on how we got to this point. First, there was some information circulated over the weekend that was misinformation. I don’t know where it originated from, but I know it was circulated in a couple of our churches. This is not a five-acre parcel. It’s a little over 2.8 acres. The only commissions that have addressed this is the Zoning Commission and they did that, approved this building lot through the 8-30g state statutes. It has been okayed by the Board of Health for water and septic. There’s been engineering and percs performed and

Zoning, like I said, did approve it. Inland-Wetlands did not have to rule on it.

The initial request went to the Housing Commission back in the middle of the winter for \$285,000. The Housing Commission recommended \$50,000 grant to, that would cover the estimated cost of the repairs to the existing house. Then advised the Housing Trust that if they wanted, if they needed other funds to go through with the other two lots, that they should come back to the Housing Commission with a request.

The Board of Selectmen met with the Housing Commission and the Washington Community Housing Trust and we recommended that a \$75,000 grant be provided due to the fact that we felt that that would assure that all the repairs required to the existing house would be made. At a May 15<sup>th</sup> special selectmen's meeting, the Washington Community Housing Trust asked the selectmen to reconsider their recommendation and asked for a grant for \$250,000. At what point we found that they had borrowed the money to purchase the property about a year prior to that and using a private loan that was due and they needed the funding at that point to cover that borrowed money. So they went to the Board of Selectmen [who] moved that recommendation forward to the, realizing the situation they are in, moved that recommendation to the Board of Finance. The Board of Finance while they felt that the money was available, there's approximately \$309,000 in the Affordable Housing Fund, they felt that they were concerned about such a large percentage of it on one project. So after a number of meetings with the Housing Trust and the Board of Finance, myself, and talking back again with the Housing Commission just to get their input, we, the Board of Selectmen moved that we felt the same as the Board of Finance that this request was grounded enough or found enough that we should have it come to the voters for their decision. The Board of Selectmen made the motion for the \$225,000 grant after talking with the Housing Trust and they felt that the was the minimum that they would need to move the project forward.

This resolution has grown some over the last few weeks. It addresses, we tried to address concerns that the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance had over the stewardship of the taxpayers' money. Because in the past, the Housing Trust has received grants from the town, but they were for previous projects that were definitive. This project hinges on the ability to develop the land as well as the ability of people to purchase it. So it's a little bit more speculative than previous projects. That's why and there was always the specter that was explained to everybody that was involved that the Housing Trust did not have the funds in reserve to fund the project solely on their own. They needed a grant of this size to move forward. Otherwise the alternative would be for them to just and resell the property to recoup their investment.

So that leads us to the point where if it does come back to the point where it has to be resold, we would want to have the grant back. The grant is to, like I said, in the resolution, to develop three affordable housing limited equity affordable housing units. If that doesn't come about that as stewards of the taxpayers' money we felt we should get the grant back and then we got involved in the percentages because it's possible within six years that maybe some of the project would be done, but not all.

Audience: Could you speak into the mic?

M. Lyon: Oh, I'm sorry. I thought I was. I could hear myself. I'm sorry. How far back do you want me to go?

The Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance felt that this project warranted a vote by the legislative body and that's why we're here tonight. Like I said, I tried to explain. Worked with the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen with the Housing Trust and we've arrived at this. They feel this is the minimum figure that they work with to move the project forward and that they still have outstanding debt on the project.

Conditions in the grant are maybe unusual at the local level, but they're not unusual at the state level. Any, all the grants that the town receives through the state or federal programs there's always conditions involved as to how and when things will be done by, what will be done, and so on. So I think this is not out of the ordinary. My communications with the Housing Trust has been that this is workable. They feel this is workable. Our attorney said that if you are to impose conditions, you have the right to impose conditions, but they must be reasonable conditions. Everybody has agreed that these are. So I will leave the rest of this to Walter Whitney, president of the Washington Community Housing Trust.

W. Whitney: Thank you, Chet. Good evening, I am Walter Whitney. I am speaking on behalf of the Washington Community Housing Trust. Thank you, ok. I'm going to be brief. It's a warm evening and I know that we all want to get on with the business, but I just want to introduce the Housing Trust and its members to you, tell you just a little bit about it. The Trust was established in 1987 by the clergy and members of our local churches to establish and maintain affordable housing for persons of modest means while maintaining the historic and aesthetic qualities of the community. Today our Board of Trustees is made up of the following persons and I'm going to ask them to stand: Ray Underwood, Mary Jane Yurchak, John Millington, Susan Wabel, Murray Haber, Martin Meyers, Terry Tiernan, Ted Bent is not here this evening, was unable to attend, John Boyer, William Fairbairn. These are the individuals that are on the Board of Trustees for the Washington Community Housing Trust. Thank you.

Over the years with the town's help and with the help of the state, the Washington Community Housing Trust has developed thirty-seven apartments at Dodge Farms, River Woods, and 16 Church Street. Each of these developments are composed of attractive, comfortable, affordable homes. Together we have created a ladder of housing opportunity. It has allowed individuals and families to live, work, and volunteer within our community. Persons who would otherwise would be unable to live in our town.

We're asking for you approval of a \$225,000 grant to the Housing Trust to acquire an existing four-bedroom house and two building lots. The Washington Community Housing Trust will renovate the existing house and prepare the other lots our parcel program. In this program the Housing Trust pays for and owns the land. It is leased to moderate income families at a very low amount for ninety-nine years. The families get their own mortgages and build their own houses. By removing the cost of the land what was once a dream to own a home can become a reality. These houses will be the top rung of the ladder to homeownership that we've been working so many years to accomplish.

That's the limit of my remarks. I will be available to answer questions, but I also want Ray Underwood to share some of his thoughts. Ray, would you come up for a moment? Thank you.

R. Underwood:

Thank you, Walter. I'm Ray Underwood, 6 Mountain Road in New Preston, CT. I serve on the Housing Trust and have for a number of years. I was asked many years ago by Allie Chapin to oversee what the Housing Trust was doing as sort of a watchdog. I think Jack Boyer was the president way back when Dodge Farm was started. I do have an interest in this I think as we all do.

I would like to talk about the Housing Trust thought process. What I believe is a window of opportunity in front of us right now. To begin, we are now seeing real estate that we have not seen in the last ten plus years. The Vincent property was one such property. It is on Route 202 next to the firehouse, has class one and two soils, and the house although in need of some work is in pretty good shape. At this point of the real estate cycle, we may have a window of two to three years until houses like this price themselves out of reach and the end of historically low interest rates.

The coincidence of these factors provide an opportunity for setting a low entry level into limited equity homeownership housing. The end game being an opportunity for local folks to become homeowners of places that can then be, and this is a key point, resold at some later date again as affordable to middle income families. Once the real estate cycle rebounds

and/or interest rates increase we will not see this opportunity in my opinion for another ten to fifteen years. We've been through this many times as you all know. The Housing Trust has been the only organization in Washington that has created housing for workforce people in the last twenty plus years. As opposed to earlier initiatives, this opportunity is to offer homeownership. In my humble opinion the difference between homeowners and tenants for the most part is that homeowners are more likely to become stakeholders in the community. By making this purchase, they are asserting that they want to be part of the community, not just passing through. These folks who then could be firemen, EMTs, volunteers, board members, little league coaches, teachers, town workers, etcetera have all the qualities that have made Washington a great place in my fifty plus years.

The Vincent project although not perfect is a good project. The Housing Trust based on its previous experiences made a conscious effort to not apply for state funds and the associated attached strings. Also this development is providing three homes on this site which is in keeping with the local neighborhood. Historically this site had three structures located on it. I have personally spoken with many of the neighbors regarding this project explaining that it will look very similar to the housing now in their neighborhood. By not soliciting state funds, we have kept the decision making process in local hands and thereby creating three workforce limited equity homes.

Because of that decision, we are here tonight to ask for funds already set aside that are specifically earmarked for just something like this. In this case it is basically to cover the cost of the land acquisition and the infrastructure to make this project feasible. In neighboring towns land has been donated to do this. With the land prices in Washington, what they continue to be, if you consider the cost of three separate building lots, this is really a bargain. The town's housing commission has had for sometime all of these funds or has had all of these funds for quite sometime. I would offer other than a lot of work and a survey or two by well meaning folks that served on that board, nothing has been created. I'm not sure why that is, but in some cases government even local government has its hands tied by state and federal regulation written with the best intentions, but in most cases not applicable to Small Town, USA. The evidence in this case is the lack of production or the lack of producing something concrete over these years.

The Housing Trust on the other hand has three very diverse facilities that meet the need for a number of our residents. This Vincent project homeownership initiative in my opinion is the best option to bring and or keep stakeholders in our community, especially at a time when real estate prices and interest rates have conspired to make it possible to not only

serve a current group of new homeowners, but with a limited equity program keep these units available over time for future generations. As a representative of the Housing Trust, I ask for your vote in favor of this grant which I believe will have short, but more importantly a long-term positive effect on our community. Thanks for your consideration.

N. Solley: Thank you Ray. Before we open this up to the floor for questions and answers, I just wanted to review in fact what I've already said. If we could keep our comments brief, if we could address the Moderator or to the person potentially answering a questions, I would choose not to have banter amongst the townspeople or amongst themselves. As far as applause, I would rather that there would not be applause, because it creates heat amongst your body and you're going to heat up the neighbor next to you.

We have created tonight a situation for a paper ballot. I would like just a sense of those present to affirm that voting on this resolution by paper ballot is what you desire. Everybody in agreement with that please raise your hand. Clearly a majority, thank you very much.

So I'd like to open up to the floor for questions and answers. I think that it will be pretty obvious as to who that will be addressed to. You must, I repeat, you must when I recognize you, stand, give your name and your street address. It has to go into the recording for the purposes of the transcript. All town meetings now have a transcript made of them.

Ken? Would you wait for the microphone please?

K. Cornet: Ken Cornet 404 Nettletown Hollow Road. You've given a lot of time to the Housing Trust to talk their project over. I think you should give some time to people who are interested, but not interested in this project to say why. Why don't we get equal time?

N. Solley: Ken, I think that right now is the chance for equal time. I don't really understand your question and if anybody feels that they want to speak to this resolution, now is the time to do so.

K. Cornet: Yes, but you've asked people to limit their comments which is on hot night like this very appropriate. So I think that maybe somebody could speak, I'm not one of them, but someone could speak about exactly why they think this is a bad project.

N. Solley: If somebody wants to address that point, they certainly may and I also am going to recognize anybody and everybody who wants to speak. Just hopefully it will be somewhat brief.



Art?

A. Peterson: Art Peterson, 41 Kirby Road, Washington. Can I address remarks to Ray? Ray? We know each other a long time so I want to ask you the first direct question. Are you comfortable with the cost estimates associated with this project relative to being able to get the job done for \$495,000?

R. Underwood: Yes, Art, I've seen the numbers. We've talked about the numbers. As everybody here probably realizes, we're not getting the number that we wanted initially, but I think, you know, we're talking about trying to keep this affordable. So in the end, my quick answer is yes. I've very comfortable with it.

A. Peterson: Ok, where's the other \$195,000 going to come from? The difference between the estimated cost is \$495,000 and the \$300,000 and change that you have in the till?

R. Underwood: Well, Walter can probably answer that. I don't have the numbers right in front of me, but I think.

A. Peterson: Ok.

R. Underwood: I'll let you talk. Walter?

W. Whitney: Everyone should have a schedule of sources and uses of funds. The total in both of those columns is \$495,000. You can see that the sources of funds are the sale of the existing house for \$200,000, the LISC, that's a local initiative startup group that funds housing trusts such as ourselves, \$10,000 and then the town grant which is \$285,000 has been reduced to \$225,000. The difference has to be made up by the Washington Community Housing Trust. That's where the funds come from.

N. Solley: Art are you done?

A. Peterson: No, there's a float going on, right? You have to float the price between the time that the money is expended. I mean there's cash flow period of time. Is that right, between the? If you spend \$495,000 and you've got \$300,000 in the bank. This \$195,000, I mean there's going to be carrying charges relative to during the construction process.

R. Underwood: That's true, Art, we've already had some carrying charges. I mean the initial idea by a number of members of the Housing Trust was to try to raise private funds. That did not work out trying to raise private funds. So we took out a loan over a year ago and so we've had those carrying costs right along. It's sort of what you have there is you have a capital

expenditure. You have investment already in the property. Then you have the sale of three properties.

A. Peterson: Right.

R. Underwood: So in the end, it ends up being basically nets out at zero, but that's because you're going to have three houses. Right?

A. Peterson: Right.

R. Underwood: Two new ones and the existing one that has been fixed up. At the end it becomes a cash flow of zero.

A. Peterson: Thanks.

N. Solley: Valerie?

V. Anderson: Valerie Anderson, 171 Blackville Road in Washington. ... couple of clarifying questions please, Mark, because I didn't hear you properly. You said that the Housing Commission, the town commission, allocated or thought \$50,000 should be coming out of their fund initially for this?

M. Lyon: Correct.

V. Anderson: Ok, and then you and the Board of Selectmen said \$75,000?

M. Lyon: We felt that that was to assure that the repairs would be made. We thought their \$50,000 budget was kind of close.

V. Anderson: Ok, and then the Board of Finance agreed with you at the \$75,000 level?

M. Lyon: We hadn't gone to the Board of Finance at that time. That was the Board of Selectmen. The process comes from the, goes to the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Selectmen make a recommendation to the Board of Finance.

V. Anderson: And the Board of Finance concurred and then said it should be a town vote.

M. Lyon: At our Board of Selectmen's meeting in May it was explained to the Board of Selectmen that the \$75,000 though it would have repaired the existing house, would not have helped with their outstanding debt. That was what they had to cover in the short term. So that's why when the Board of Selectmen went to the Board of Finance with the big picture and the Housing Trust appeared with the Board of Finance, we forwarded a request for \$250,000 which was less than what the Housing Trust had

requested at \$285,000. The Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen were concerned about that large a percentage of the fund in one project. Working with the Housing Trust we arrived at the \$225,000 figure which the Board of Selectmen moved on to the town meeting.

V. Anderson: Ok, and so that leaves about \$75,000 in the Housing Commission?

M. Lyon: Yes, \$75,000 or \$85,000. There's like \$309,000 and change there now.

V. Anderson: Ok, and there's \$25,000 already in that was granted from the town?

M. Lyon: No,

V. Anderson: So \$25,000 is not in yet.

M. Lyon: Not into?

V. Anderson: I thought you said that the Board of Selectmen said \$25,000 to go in.

M. Lyon: No, no, no.

V. Anderson: Ok.

M. Lyon: There's. What this is for is strictly \$225,000. That's the only town funds and that's up to date and for future that would be allocated to this project.

V. Anderson: Ok, but the Housing Commission is sitting on the money and they decided \$50,0000 is sufficient. Now I'd like to know a couple of things if you would just give me leave for a moment. What bank is going to lend against land that isn't owned by a mortgager. What arrangements been made?

M. Lyon: The Housing Trust has worked with Litchfield Bancorp and Union Savings Bank and both have done these types of loans in the past in other communities.

V. Anderson: So they would lend?

M. Lyon: There is a track record.

V. Anderson: Ok.

M. Lyon: That shows that these are mortgages that will be granted.

V. Anderson: Ok, but this is also the first time we've done this in the Town of Washington. They have lent against the Litchfield Trust. Correct?

M. Lyon: And Cornwall and several other towns I believe.

V. Anderson: Ok, and this is the first time that we will assist them in building houses instead of apartments or condos as we already have?

M. Lyon: Correct.

V. Anderson: And then, why are we selling, or why would they sell a house for \$200,000 when \$250,000 went into it?

M. Lyon: \$245,000 was the purchase price for house and the land.

V. Anderson: Well, it says purchase.

M. Lyon: And the house needs repairs.

V. Anderson: Purchase of property and closing costs and rehabilitation is about, if I take away the closing costs just putting hard dollars into the purchase of the house and its refurbishment is \$250,000. Sale of existing refurbished farmhouse is \$200,000.

M. Lyon: Correct. I'm not sure what the question is?

V. Anderson: Well, there's a loss of \$50,000 already.

M. Lyon: Correct.

V. Anderson: Has the, this is my last question. Has the Housing Commission considered the fact that we have quite a few, they talk about this window of opportunity, we have quite a few houses. One of which is being auctioned off on my street, on my road this Saturday, a beautiful house. Unfortunately, it does need some love and care, but it's being auctioned off. I don't know what the price is going to be. Wouldn't it be better for the Housing Commission to take a look at that kind of approach to help Washington citizens to buy house and land with down payment money and perhaps guarantees instead of going again into the limited equity? We've been done this road a while.

M. Lyon: I do know that.

V. Anderson: You could do this about five or six houses in this market right now.

M. Lyon: I do know that the Housing Commission is working on a program similar to that.

V. Anderson: Because we have to keep our workforce here and we want to make sure that workforce owns house and land. Thank you.

N. Solley: Right here.

M. Gavenas: Martha Gavenas, 19 Revere Road in Washington. I wanted to say that the reason limited equity housing is good and a difference from what you suggest with giving people some money to make a down payment on a house is that with limited equity housing you have right in your deed that when that house is resold, it's going to be resold at an affordable price. So you're able to have affordable housing with these houses for ninety-nine years if you want.

N. Solley: Anybody else? Over here on this side? Ok.

J. Mustich: Thanks, John, I'm Joe Mustich, 404 Nettleton Hollow Road in Washington. I'm speaking as an individual resident here of twenty years. I'm also a licensed real estate broker in Connecticut. Also, I'm on the Housing Commission. We in fact only voted for \$50,000, As Mark said early on there was a rather strange insert in a church bulletin that really distorted the facts. I really would like to know who was responsible for doing that.

Audience: Could you turn around and address the audience?

J. Mustich: No, I was told to address the moderator. If you can't hear me, then move up closer.

Audience: [Inaudible]

J. Mustich: Well, I'm sorry. I was told. Can you hear me? Can you hear me now? Very good. I don't understand why we're voting on three limited equity houses when right up the street as you all well know, by Quarry Ridge. Do you know where Quarry Ridge is, on Mygatt? There are four limited equity homes, affordable limited equity homes.

What Jack? You want the mic? Yeah, there are four and there's one that's got a. Oh, you don't realize. You're on the Housing Trust and you don't realize that.

I'm going to turn and speak to you.

N. Solley: No, make your comments to me.

J. Mustich: Exactly, thank you. That's why we're doing it this way and not your way.

Again, there are. I'm surprised Jack doesn't realize this. There are four limited. Could we have some silence in the audience?

N. Solley: Please everybody.

J. Mustich: Four limited equity homes on Mygatt currently on the market. They've been on the market for a long time. One currently has an offer on it. That's a private program. Why are we giving \$225,000 to the Housing Trust?

Secondly, I'm on the Board of Housing Commission and what we have done. We're currently working on a program, mortgage assistant down payment loans answering what you were saying, Valerie. Valerie Anderson has been working on this as Ken Cornet has been for a very long time whereby we are loaning money to people to sell, Washington people, to sell their own homes. It's called mortgage assisted down payment and it's a loan. The town would have a lien on that property and when it's sold the money comes back to us. I think that's a better use of our money. I think that's why we only wanted to give \$50,000.

Sorry for the long.

N. Solley: Thanks, Joe. [Moderator recognizes J. Buonaiuto]

J. Buonaiuto: I'm Janet Buonaiuto, 47 Shearer Road. I have a few quick questions. The age of existing house on Vincent farm, does anyone know that?

M. Lyon: 1935.

J. Buonaiuto: 1935. Does anyone know what kind of foundation it's on? Is it a stone foundation or poured cement?

M. Lyon: Poured concrete.

J. Buonaiuto: Poured concrete. Ok, there's a barn on the property.

M. Lyon: No, the barn collapsed when we had that heavy snow a couple of winters ago.

J. Buonaiuto: Ok, and that's been all taken away?

M. Lyon: Yes, yes.

J. Buonaiuto: Your estimate for insulation. Is that to insulate the entire house or just the ceilings?

M. Lyon: Six inches in the ceiling, blown-in in the walls. I'm being prompted here.

J. Buonaiuto: Ok, that seems really low, \$1500. How many square feet to this house?

W. Whitney: The house is approximately 2000 square feet.

J. Buonaiuto: Ok.

W. Whitney: We do have a firm proposal from an insurance company for that price.

J. Buonaiuto: You mean an insulation company?

W. Whitney: Yes.

J. Buonaiuto: Ok, that sounds like a great deal.

W. Whitney: Yes, it does. There are many companies that have given us favorable pricing. I suspect in some cases the companies understand that we're a non-profit and understand our mission is.

J. Buonaiuto: Ok, you mentioned that it's 2.8 acres. Ray Underwood mentioned that it's class one and two soils. If you go even class one soils, each lot would have to be 1.5 acres. If you put three houses on that property, you would need 4.5 so you're kind of breaking the soil based zoning regulations that we have in town. How do you explain that?

W. Whitney: The state 8-30g housing regulation permits greater density for houses that are going to be occupied by moderate income individuals. In this case, the property is limited by the health departments determination of the number of bedrooms. This particular property was qualified by the engineers and by the Washington Health Department to support twenty-seven bedrooms. Now there's only four bedrooms there now and we propose six additional bedrooms, three in each of two three-bedroom houses. So a total of thirteen bedrooms as opposed to twenty-seven that would be available if this were developed by some other 8-30g developer that wanted to maximize the bedrooms. But, it's all done in accordance with existing regulation and it has been approved in that manner.

J. Buonaiuto: Ok, but not, just not the town regulations as far as soil based zoning goes.

R. Underwood: Janet, I appreciate your question, but I would say that if you look at the town village centers, they have a lot less property than that. I can tell you from past experience that this is class one or class two soils. One of the things that we thought was really good about the property is that we could develop it in this fashion and it would be fine. But, we chose not to get crazy and as I said I personally spoke to most of the neighbors. They realize this is going to look like their house, no different. There used to be

three structures on the property so health wise and engineering wise we are being way conservative with what we're doing on this property.

J. Buonaiuto: Well, can you tell me exactly how many acres per lot? This map is kind of hard to see anything on. Can you tell me when you've divided it up, how many, what's the, how many acres per lot?

R. Underwood: Well, first of all it's 2.8 acres and there's going to be three structures, three houses on it.

J. Buonaiuto: Right.

R. Underwood: So it'll be a little less than one acre per house.

J. Buonaiuto: Ok, alright. The comment that I have is you have always said that it's we don't want outside developers coming in and breaking our zoning regulations, but it seems like you're kind of doing it. Even though you say you're going to be doing less than somebody else would. It still, you're kind of, you know, breaking your own regulations. Last comment I have is that I feel the real estate market is already saturated with homes for sale and I agree with Valerie Anderson from years ago and it's the same proposal today. We should help people to get into homes that are already for sale. Give them something, you know, whether it's down payment help or fix up the house help and let them own their own home. Thank you.

N. Solley: Anybody else? On this side over here who wants to speak, has a question? Andy?

A. Johnson: My name is Andy Johnson. I live at Bee Brook Road. I was reading in the minutes of July 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, Selectmen's meeting, and this question is to Mark. I got the feeling from reading these minutes that you guys had requested information from the Housing Trust and they weren't completely forthcoming with that information. Is that accurate statement?

M. Lyon: They have provided us with a minimal amount of financial business plan.

A. Johnson: Ok.

M. Lyon: And so what they've given us is what we have to work with.

A. Johnson: I also read there was a fellow named Chris Charles, is he an elected official?

M. Lyon: No.



A. Johnson: Ok, forget that then. Further in the minutes it says that you, Carey, and Bedini do not endorse this project. In fact, you went out of your way to say that you didn't endorse this project. Is that correct?

M. Lyon: I did not. I feel. I think our sense was that we all had some questions about the feasibility of the project. That's why we wrote the resolution as it has been written.

A. Johnson: Specifically in the meeting, uh, in the minutes, you say you do not endorse the project.

M. Lyon: I would say we did not vote. I guess you could say we didn't endorse it.

A. Johnson: That's what the minutes say.

M. Lyon: Well, that's, I guess I can't argue with Mary Anne Greene.

A. Johnson: Do you still feel that same way?

M. Lyon: I think that this is the type of housing we would like to see developed. I have concerns about this project which as stewards of the taxpayers money we tried, we addressed with our resolution. I feel that it was done in a fashion that it warranted coming to the legislative body for their approval.

A. Johnson: Ok, so do you, just the fact that we have the meeting doesn't mean you guys really endorse the project. Right?

M. Lyon: You could take it however you want, Andy.

A. Johnson: Well, I'm reading the meeting, the minutes, that's what it said. Thank you.

N. Solley: [Inaudible]

J. Lodsins: Joan Lodsins, 12 Tompkins Hill, Washington. Going along with what this gentleman just said, why are we continuing this? The Board of Finance said not a good idea. The Board of Selectmen said not a good idea. Instead of this tonight, why don't we put it to a machine vote in November? That question I could address to Mark I think.

Audience: Could you repeat the last part of the statement please?

J. Lodsins: I asked.

M. Lyon: Joan asked why it didn't go to a machine vote in November. Because, this is typically the type of activity that goes on at our town meeting. We also

understand the Housing Trust dilemma that they need a decision one way or the other so that they can move forward or not with their project.

J. Lodsins: May I make a motion that it go to a machine vote in November?

N. Solley: Joan I would not advise it because this body cannot take up such a motion. To make a motion to go to a referendum must be by petition that goes to the Town Clerk or the Board of Selectmen as evidenced by our last town meeting with the same issue, the same question, a different issue. This body tonight cannot take up that motion. It's out of order.

J. Lodsins: That body.

N. Solley: By state statute.

J. Lodsins: But it was ok at the last meeting?

N. Solley: No it wasn't.

J. Lodsins: But that's what happened.

N. Solley: The motion at the last meeting which was regarding term limits was an indefinite postponement which was actually voted on so that the actual resolution before that town meeting was never voted on. It was indefinitely postponed and that was brought up by the floor. That was brought up by somebody in the audience.

J. Lodsins: Thank you.

N. Solley: And that can happen tonight.

D. Verstandig: I'm Davyne, 76 Hinkle Road. I appreciate the varying opinion, but we're all over a hundred of us have come here tonight in order. We read the announcements. We're here to exchange ideas and opinions and to vote, number one. Number Two, I would just like to say I've lived here thirty-one years and one of the things about this community is it's a very special community. We're interested in our own future, but I think one of the unique things about this is we're interested in "the" future. The future lies in the hands of young families, young families with children, people who are wanting to move into the community, settle here and be a part of our workforce, our schools, our teachers, all the rest of it. So I would just hope that people would, maybe I'm being overly simplistic, but when we think about not only our future, but the future of the town which is what we're talking about. We want diversity. We want social diversity, economic diversity, racial, gender. We want every kind of possibility which we don't

have yet. I think this is a route to a more successful and diverse community. Thank you.

Audience: [Clapping]

N. Solley: Oh, John. I'm sorry. John, right, right, let's go over to this side a little bit too.

L. Peterson: Hi, I'm Liz Peterson, 41 Kirby Road. I'd like to thank the Housing Trust for their hard work. I understand that their hearts are in the right place. However, that being said I am unalterably opposed to clustering moderate or low income housing anywhere in town. That's why I support something in the nature of what Valerie and some other people have spoken to tonight. That there are affordable houses in town that could be, people could be given a leg up for total ownership, not a limited ownership. I believe that is the way to go and not to have three of them together. I think that what we do then is we allow. Looking at Myfield on one side at the top of the hill and the Vincent property on the other and I'm very concerned about an area being designated as a moderate low income area in town. Someone spoke to diversity. Well, I like diversity too, but I think it applies to housing as well as the people that are coming in to buy those homes.

Audience: [Clapping]

S. Bishop-Wrabel: Thank you, John. Am I using the mic correctly? Thank you Valerie and Liz.

Clerk: Could you please identify yourself?

S. Bishop-Wrabel: My name is Susan Bishop-Wrabel. I am a trustee of the Washington Community Housing Trust. I live in New Preston on Baldwin Hill Road very close to the proposed Vincent development, back to back actually. My property is with Mygatt Road. I have many friends who live in the Quarry Ridge development which is not moderate income and is a cluster of housing between Myfield and our proposed site, just to point out the geography.

I would like to read into the record if I may very quickly from the Plan of Conservation and Development in effect presently, year 2003. Section 5 page 5 and I quote:

“The Housing Study Committee report made the following key findings and recommendations. Number one to recognize the clear need for more affordable housing options. Two, to develop a ten-year plan to construct a minimum of ninety-six new affordable housing units to result in a total of

140 affordable units including the Ellsworth Apartments, Dodge Farms, River Woods, and the eleven units approved for the former Montessori School site in New Preston.” Which as you all know has come to pass to be the 16 Church Street Development by the Washington Community Housing Trust.

“Number three, focus on the housing needs of current and past Washington residents or workers with moderate incomes, parenthetically senior citizens, low to moderate income persons, and young adults.”

“Number four, seek funding from a variety of sources including private donations, town funding, and state or federal agents, grants.” I beg your pardon, grants.

“Number five, locate housing units wherever appropriate land is available with some priority for existing developed sites or village centers.”

That is five of seven recommendations in our town’s Plan of Conservation and Development. Except for the Ellsworth Apartments which were cited in this as pre-existing, the Washington Community Housing Trust is the only organization which to date has enacted affordable housing in our town.

I have a brief other remark of a more personal nature and that is to say that I believe a balanced population is not just an ideal. It is an economic necessity. We must think in terms of our taxes, of our schools, and of our emergency services. The effort of the Washington Community Housing Trust is just a start, maybe a drop in the bucket, in light of the recognized needs for our community’s health. We must not be convinced to perceive that in the world of affordable housing it is we against they. Our development is not in competition with other housing stock existing in town which might be affordable now, but which may not necessarily remain so. If we fail as a community to act now, we shall risked being rightly perceived as an inaccessible community by the very capable and talented people we wish to attract to balance our aging population. Once the reputation has been earned it will be very difficult to reverse. Let us not find ourselves not only trying to fund affordable housing, but also a public relations campaign in which we must burnish an image as a good place to live. Thank you.

N. Solley: Someone who has not spoken? Yes?

E. McCormack: Eileen McCormack, I live at 45 Quarry Ridge. Ray, I guess this question would be directed to you. With Myfield having three, maybe four, houses there that they’ve been trying to sell at least two of them for four years, all four of them are for sale for \$135,000 or \$165,000, why is this going to be

more attractive to someone at a higher price when they can't sell the Myfield houses?

Audience: [Clapping]

W. Fairbairn: Let me just. My name is Bill Fairbairn, 71 Green Hill Road. Let me just try and address this. There are as of 11:01 this morning, there are eighty-five properties listed in Washington under the Greater Fairfield Multiple Listing Service. There are six of them that are under \$200,000. Four of them are at Myfield. Two of them at \$165,000. Two of them at \$187,500 and they're beautiful homes. They're in a common interest community which is different from what we're doing. So, you know, what we're proposing is, just as been mentioned, is to create that diversity. For the person that wants a common interest ownership type place, they have that. We're going to provide single-family limited equity. The only two houses that are under \$200,000 which I brought with me. One, in order to go see it you have to sign an indemnification and a waiver letter before you step in it because they're afraid you're going to get hurt. The other one is referred to as needing tender loving care and vision. What these houses do, these new houses we're doing are brand new, [for] the people that going to move into these houses. When you talk about a down payment assistance type thing that is a good program, but the problem is it doesn't keep the property in perpetuity. As was said, when they go to resell the property, the town will have a lien and get the money back. But, let's say if they buy the house for a \$100,000 and the town loans them \$20,000 and ten years down the road they sell the house for \$300,000. Well, they're going to give back the \$20,000, but now the house is unaffordable. So it doesn't really work in terms of keeping it in perpetuity affordable which these will do. So I don't know if that helps answer your question or if I could.

E. McCormack: If and when these don't sell, will they become rental properties like Myfield?

W. Fairbairn: No, absolutely, they will not. These will be sold.

E. McCormack: So they'll be vacant?

W. Fairbairn: [Inaudible with microphone feedback.]

The two new houses, two new houses will not be built unless somebody has a mortgage on it. We're putting in the infrastructure. So the two new houses will be built.

E. McCormack: Ray, I believe we were told that with Myfield as well, that nothing would be built until they were sold.

R. Underwood

This is not Myfield. This is a limited equity homeownership program. When a qualified buyer, somebody we'd like to see in town is able to get a mortgage, they have few models they can put on this foundation or foundations that are there so that they can actually have their own house. It's a different situation. I will grant you your point that, you know, the existing house, the Vincent house is there. You know, it could be borderline, but it's not going to be an old farmhouse when it's done. We're going fixed up most of it. It's going to not be a new house, but it's going to have some major repairs done to it. So and I would echo what Bill said. I would just say that twenty years ago, maybe fifteen at least, I wrote a letter to Allie Chapin and talked to him at that time about a down payment assistance program in this town. I think my point being and I hope, personally, I hope the Housing Commission can come up with this program. I think it'd be a great idea. However, I echo what Billy says that will only keep that house affordable for this one generation. A limited equity proposal will keep it affordable for hopefully a number of generations. My point being in that there've been many good people on the Housing Commission, but we have yet to have this program. If we're going to wait for it to come, we need to have it now because now is when the window of opportunity is there. So I understand your concerns. I think the Housing Trust has thought through as much of this as we can. We're trying to keep this in local hands so the local people can determine who's going to be in these houses. So I, you know.

N. Solley:

[Inaudible]

M. Meyers

Marty Meyers, 27 Winston Drive. We're all gathered here whether you're for the Trust or against it. I don't think you're cognizant of the fact that, I think, we have to have 120 units of affordable housing in Washington. So instead of fighting with each other, we should all work together. 120 units, we have approximately thirty-seven right now. We put three units up, the four units that are up on the hill, we're still under fifty. I don't think you understand what the ramifications are. One, there's big units of pieces of property out here. Somebody can come in, buy a hundred acres and put up cluster housing. Say they put up thirty houses on fifteen acres. They can take the rest of it and put up these huge houses. Now some people are against cluster housing. There's no stopping what they can do. It's, you know, we have to look into that and I don't think you're aware of it. So instead of fighting about up on the hill, you know, the four houses up there, the three that we want to put up. You know, work together. Think about it. Think about what your future is. Think about. I look out here I see a lot of families. How many of you have kids that live here. Put your hands up, two of you, three of you. You know, why do they move out? Because they can't afford it. You know, but anyhow, you know it's. We spent a lot of time to answer another question that we had. We put up two units. We put up River Woods and Church Street and you wanted to know

if we were over budget basically. I was treasurer when they went up and we were within 3% of what the estimates were. So I'd like to see some developers do that. That's about it. Thank you.

N. Solley: Let's go in the back, John.

P. Moore: Thank you, hi, Pat Moore, 14 Walker Brook Road, Washington. I'm just thinking that looking ahead to the future homeowner. If I was looking to buy a house in Washington, I'm wondering why I would want this opportunity. I do appreciate what you're trying to do. However, [audio feedback] how can I get this to stop. If I'm buying this house for \$200,000 and I assume I have to put any improvements into it and I can only sell it for you, it's going to be capped, the sale is going to be capped to keep it limited affordable housing, what is going to motivate me to put a deck on the back or improve the windows or paint the outside or do some landscaping? Are we going to be down here in ten years when I decide to sell the house and there's been no improvements to it for the next homeowner to keep it affordable, but livable? Has anybody thought about the homeowner and who's going to pay for all those improvements and let them get some money out so they can move up in the world? Thank you.

W. Whitney: They are very good questions and yes we have thought about it. Firstly, in that house, the farmhouse, the four-bedroom farmhouse that we propose to sell for \$200,000, we will make it safe. We'll make it comfortable. There won't be any deferred maintenance that has to be addressed, but to answer your other question about future improvements to the property whether it's that house or another house, there's a lease which determines what can be done in terms of improvements. Improvements to the house, let's say someone wants to put an addition on the house or build a swimming pool or do something that perhaps would take the property out of what we consider to be an affordable range. Any improvements, alterations, structural changes, have to be approved by the lessor which is the Washington Community Housing Trust. So we're not going to allow changes to be made that would make the house or unaffordable or unattractive to another purchaser.

The other question, the other very good question that you asked is why would somebody want to buy it if they could only sell it for what they paid for it. Well, the limit on the equity is in what they can realize in the sales price and that is the same as the increase in the consumer price index over the period of time that they own it. So if the consumer price index, and this is the way it's done in Cornwall, Litchfield, Kent, Salisbury. So if the consumer price index goes up say 3% a year over ten years then the house could be sold for 30% more than the purchase price, but it's still going to be at the same absolute affordable level because everything has gone up that amount. Am I making myself clear on that point?

S. Papsin: Sandy Papsin, 30 Mygatt Road. I just want to make a clarification on some statements that were made earlier. I live diagonally across from the Myfield project. There are currently two homes there. Within the last seven days the pieces of a third modular home were put on a foundation. There are two occupants there in the existing homes.

My next statement is a question. \$50,000 to spend on a house that is almost eighty years old is a significant amount of money. I don't see anything in the renovation costs regarding the possibility of asbestos or lead paint. Has that subject been investigated at all? If it is found to contain those elements, what are your contingency plans at that point?

W. Whitney: Thank you. I just want to add on to the last question before I move onto yours. If somebody does want to make an improvement to the house, let's say they want to put a bedroom on the first floor, an additional bedroom on the first floor or some other thing to accommodate their family and their living needs, and it's in concert with affordability, the Housing Trust would approve it. They would monitor the cost and when the individual sold the house at a point in time, they would be able to recover the cost of that improvement.

The question on asbestos or lead paint, we had the house inspected. We did not receive any report of either, but we assume that there is lead paint. I mean the house is a 1935 house. So like any other house of that vintage, chances are that there's lead paint in the house. There are ways that it's addressed. It's encapsulated. It's a concern for families that have infant children. It will be addressed in the way that the law provides for it and is in accordance with a healthy approach to delivering the house like any other house that is of that vintage.

S. Papsin: I'm just wondering where the funds are going to originate from to correct that problem. With a four-bedroom house, it's almost a given that you are going to have children there.

W. Whitney: The house was recently painted. It's been painted with acrylic paint. The law that pertains to lead paint and the encapsulation of lead paint is very specific and detailed. We will make sure that we are in conformance with it.

N. Solley: Liddy?

L. Adams: Liddy Adams, 164 Wykeham Road. I'm also the chairperson of the Washington Housing Commission. I just wanted to make two points. For those of you who are not aware, the Washington Housing Commission is an appointed body of commissioners by the Board of Selectmen



authorized by the Town of Washington. The Washington Community Housing Trust is a separate private non-profit. We're not one and the same. I just wanted to make that people knew that. There isn't any reason to think that we are the, but I just wanted to make that clarification.

In reference to Sandy's question about the asbestos and such, that's one of the reasons why we chose to limit our seed money for this potential project at the Vincent property to the amount of \$50,000 knowing full well that there were things that needed to be addressed as she mentions. We looked at the property extensively on various visits and we thought that our recommendation to the Board of Selectmen in the amount of \$50,000 was a good place to start to try and find out where we needed to go to address potential issues either problems or not with this project. So we are also wanting to make sure that everybody here tonight knows that we are stewards of your money and we don't spend money that we don't think we should spend money for unless we have to. Again, we're not spending your money, we're making recommendations to the Board of Selectmen to make a final decision in conjunction with other commissions as well. Thank you.

N. Solley: Winston?

W. Fowlkes: Thank you, John. My name is Winston Fowlkes. I'm a principal of Myfield LLC. For the record I would just like to basically confirm with the lady over to my right here has said. There are four houses at Myfield, limited equity, which are available for sale. Two of them are for sale at approximately \$165,000 each. Two of them are for sale at \$187,500. One of the houses is presently under contract and being built for a purchaser who is a member of the fire department of Washington. Another one has already been built and is available for sale today. The other two will be built at any time that a qualified purchaser comes to us and submits the necessary paperwork. I simply wanted to make the audience here advised that all of this has been done at no cost to the taxpayers of Washington. Thank you.

N. Solley: Joan?

J. Gauthey: Joan Gauthey, 26 Old North Road. I'd like to remind the people of the Town of Washington that the Housing Trust attempted to get the Myfield property and develop it and it was voted down.

R. Sears: I call the question.

N. Solley: There is.

Clerk: Please identify yourself.

N. Solley: Yep.

R. Sears: Richard Sears of 43 Cook Street. I call the question.

N. Solley: There has been a motion to move the question. Is there a second?

Clerk: We need an identification please.

S. Haber: I'm Susan Haber, 58 Upper Churchill Road and I second the motion.

N. Solley: This is a subordinate motion and this motion because it is moving the question to, if this passes, we'll go right to a vote on the primary motion. If this fails, we will continue to have discourse back and forth as we have been. So there's been a motion and a second to move the question. Does anybody have any questions regarding what we're doing.

W. Fairbairn: Not debatable.

N. Solley: Yep, it is. It is. You're right, Bill. It's not debatable. We have acquired in the past a two-thirds vote by the assembled body to pass the movement of this question. There are approximately a hundred and seventy-five to eighty people here. So, then I will put forth all in favor of moving the question so as to end discourse on this primary resolution signify by raising your hand. I may ask for a secondary vote. All those opposed. The motion carries. So what we will do now is we will go right to the primary, voting on the primary resolution. Ok, everybody clear?

Audience: [Inaudible]

N. Solley: We did. We did that. Do you have the? I will read the resolution again and at the commencement of my reading this, everyone whose last name begins with A through L will proceed to the left side of the hall as I face it. Everyone with from L to Z on the right side. There are registered voters. I'm now going to read the resolution so please.

RESOLVED: That the Town of Washington shall approve a grant in an amount not to exceed \$225,000 payable to the Washington Community Housing Trust ...

and it doesn't matter if you're paying attention to me or not.

... from the Town of Washington Affordable Housing fund for the purpose of purchasing and developing property at 181 New Milford Turnpike, Assessor's Map 11-1 ...

So forth and so on.

**PAUSE:**                    **Recording paused during process of paper ballot vote.**

N. Solley:                    If everyone's voted, then we're good. Has everybody voted who wants to vote. It appears so.

**PAUSE:**                    **Recording paused while paper ballot vote finalized.**

N. Solley:                    Ladies and gentlemen, we have a tally of the votes if you all want to come in and hear this.

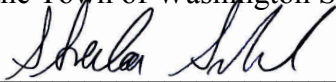
Ok, the vote count, 157 people voted. Yay, yes, 73. No, 84. The resolution fails. Upon that ...

M. Lyon:                    I move we adjourn.

N. Solley:                    The First Selectmen moves we adjourn. All in favor? Thank you very much for all coming.

Adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

.....  
I, Sheila Silvernail, certify to the best of my ability the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript of the Town of Washington Special Town Meeting on July 11, 2013.

 \_\_\_\_\_ Dated at Washington, CT this 13th day of July 2013.