

Washington Housing Commission

Minutes

May 3, 2022

1. Call to order

Present: Members: Judie Gorra, Shane Mongar, Robert Woodroffe, Lindsay Larson

Facilitator: Michelle Gorra

Guests: Chris Charles, Henrietta Small, Carrie Lloyd, Joan Lodson

2. Review of Minutes of March 8, 2022

The minutes were accepted as presented

3. Old Business

a. Judie reported that the Town Meeting passed the request for increasing the spending threshold to \$10,000 without needing to go to a town meeting.

4. New Business

a. Report from the NWCT Regional Housing Special Meeting on Friday April 8. Judie, Michelle, and Bill Fairbairn were in attendance at the meeting. The meeting consisted of reports about what the various towns are doing. The Ct. Housing Commissioner Mosquero Bruno was present after having toured one of the sites. The purpose of the meeting was to convince the Commissioner that the small towns in our area are in need of funding. After the meeting Jocelyn Ayer reported that the Commissioner will provide \$200,000 over the next 2 years for the Litchfield County Center for Housing Opportunity to provide shared project management staffing support to the all-volunteer non-profit housing organizations. In addition the CT Housing Commissioner is planning to provide the Center for Housing Opportunity with \$300,000 in pre-development seed funding. The Housing Commission welcomed this good news.

b. Discussion re: the WCHT application for the CDBG grant. A hearing was held on the application. The hearing was attended by Judie, Shane and Michelle and several residents of the Dodge Farm affordable housing development. David Berto and Bill Fairbairn were present on zoom. The grant being requested will be used to replace boilers, some windows, parking update and some kitchen counters. It was recommended that letters of support be sent to the Board of Selectmen. The Housing Commission agreed that Judie should send a letter of support.

c. Discussion re planning a meeting with Board of Selectmen, Zoning Commission, Planning Commission, Conservation Commission, Sustainability Committee, Washington Community Housing Trust, WEC and the public with a presentation by Kate Briggs Johnson re the Haystack Woods project in Norfolk. The Housing Commission agreed that we should go forward with this. Michelle will look at the various commissions' schedules and come up with some possible days and dates. Judie will then contact Kate Johnson to schedule a date for the presentation.

d. Discussion re: funding studies on the Washington Community Housing Trust's property on Baldwin Hill Road. Judie reported that she had been unable to get an estimate from Howland. The Commission felt that this should be done by the Washington Community Housing Trust and Judie said she would contact the Trust so that they can bring a proposal to the Housing Commission.

e. Discussion re article for the Washington Newsletter. The article is due May 16. The Commission agreed that we should start with information about the Down Payment Assistance plan. Michelle said she would write up a preliminary article and send it to the commission members for their suggestions, edits, etc. Michelle distributed copies of the flier that she had printed.

f. Washington's Zoning Regs vs. PA 21-29 - The Zoning Commission was going to address this at their last meeting but because of so much other business was unable to do so. All members of the Housing Commission are encouraged to attend the next Zoning Commission meeting which will be held on May 23 at 7:30.

5. Other Business:

1. Judie and Michelle met with Bill Fairbairn and members of the Steep Rock Association Board re a property on Nettleton Hollow Road. The property is a farm which has been given to Steep Rock to preserve as farm land. The Steep Rock Board is investigating whether or not the small house on the property could qualify for affordable housing if it were to be reserved for a farmer. A discussion re donating to the Housing Trust vs. Steep Rock ensued. Lindsay brought to the Commission's attention a webinar which is being given by a lawyer for Steep Rock and other land trusts regarding the tax benefit of donating land. The commission agreed that a webinar about donating to the Housing Trust would be worthwhile. Members are encouraged to look into the possibility of having such a presentation.

2. Discussion re the Community Center and possibility of including some affordable housing. Michelle explained that the Center is meant to be an open welcoming facility and adding another floor would possibly make it feel like a school or hospital. Chris Charles questioned the estimated cost of \$2mil for adding 4 apartments as being too high.

6. Meeting was adjourned at 6:50 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judie Gorra
Chairman, Housing Commission

<https://youtu.be/1mucoNAEVUM>
link to meeting recording