

# January 8, 2007

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

**Guests:** None

**Visitors:** Joe Mustich, Ken Cornet, Geri Sager, Diane Dupuis, Valerie Andersen, Janet Buonaiuto

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

## Minutes of December 11

The December minutes were amended as follows: Under the heading Visitors, paragraph six, line four "namely, the state (DECD - Department of Economic and Community Development) defines affordable housing the following way: 'moderate income is defined as being at or below 80 percent of the state or area median income and low income as being at or below 60 percent of the area or state median income'"

Liddy Adams moved to accept the minutes as amended. Sue Werkhoven seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

## Visitors

Valerie Andersen presented a proposal for affordable housing that could be added to approaches already being used or considered by the town's Housing Commission and/or the Washington Community Housing Trust (WCHT). Entitled "Washington Homes for Washington Citizens", Mrs. Andersen's proposal involves support for qualified families enabling them to purchase houses currently for sale. In her handout, she included a list of houses currently on the market for under \$400000, which is the price range on which she predicates her calculations for financial assistance. Examples of such assistance could include down payment or renovation loans and interest only or longer-term mortgages. The WCHT would have the role of housing authority while the town's Housing Commission would act as a facilitator.

The Housing Commission unanimously accepted copies of Mrs. Andersen's handout detailing her proposal. (A copy of this handout "Affordable Home Ownership: Washington Homes for Washington Citizens" is on file at the Town Clerk's office.) Wayne Hileman asked for clarification of various points during the course of Mrs. Andersen's presentation. Liddy Adams said the Housing Commission spent a couple of months determining its purpose and goals. While the Housing Commission could contribute monies from its budget to projects that helped meet these purposes and goals, the Housing Commission was not set up to provide ongoing financial oversight of projects. She also thought that the Board of Finance would react to such oversight as an accounting nightmare. However, the WCHT might be interested in this approach since this is more in line with what they do.

Various comments and concerns were voiced by visitors. Diane Dupuis was worried about whether the wetlands on the five Potter Farm lots designated for affordable housing had been sufficiently analyzed. Ken Cornet said he was shocked that the Housing Commission had given most of the monies from their current budget for this one project. Wayne Hileman said that, as the Housing Commission's fund is replenished yearly, there will be opportunities to support other projects as they arise. Wayne Hileman said that since there is a rigorous process for approving the use of funds, there were many steps still to go beyond the Housing Commission's initial approval of the partial funding of this proposal.

Ken Cornet asked what the purpose of the Housing Commission was. Liddy Adams responded that its purpose was to ask the people in Washington what they wanted regarding housing and then try to address this. Wayne Hileman referred Mr. Cornet to the ordinance that created the Housing Commission, which clearly spells out its purpose and duties. Janet Buonaiuto said she had walked around the Potter Farm and was concerned about some lots requiring engineered septic systems. Wayne Hileman said the Housing Commission is not a land use commission, but an advisory body. More specific analysis, if needed, would come from the Planning, Zoning and Inland Wetlands Commissions. Jean Suddaby said many valid questions had been raised and felt these should be brought up at the next

Selectmen's meeting.

### **Senior Housing Survey**

The Housing Commission continued its discussion of the Senior Housing Survey. Don Brigham said he thought the congregate living data jumped out at him. Wayne Hileman gave members a proposed format to follow for their report. He also gave out drafts of ways to clarify the state requirements for qualifying for affordable home ownership in Washington. Evidently, there was confusion regarding such definitions for terms such as "moderate", "affordable", and "workforce". He asked the members to comment on these drafts.

Don Brigham handed out a suggested outline for how the Housing Commission could go about investigating affordable housing opportunities. Also, now that data had been collected describing senior citizen housing needs, additional assessments were needed so that other groups could express their opinions.

### **Adjournment**

Wayne Hileman asked for a motion to table the rest of the agenda items. Sue Werkhoven so moved with Wayne Hileman seconding the motion, which was passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:55.

**The next scheduled meeting is Monday, February 12, at 5:00 p.m. in the Land Use Room, Town Hall.**

Respectfully submitted,

Patte Doran