

# **December 11, 2006**

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

**Guests:** None

**Visitors:** Valerie Andersen; First Selectman Richard Sears

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

## **Minutes of November 13, 2006 Meeting**

Sue Werkhoven made a motion to accept the November minutes as submitted. Wayne Hileman seconded the motion which was carried unanimously.

### **Privilege of the Floor**

Chairman Wayne Hileman thanked Jean Suddaby for her many contributions as a Housing Commission member. He was pleased to announce that, although her term was expiring, she was willing to accept a second term.

Wayne Hileman said there was a FOI question raised regarding the November 13 Housing Commission meeting. At that meeting, a discussion and subsequent action concerning the Potter Farm proposition took place, although this topic had not been on the meeting agenda. Since he always wants to be sure, to the best of his knowledge, that he is in compliance with FOI rules, Wayne called the FOI office and spoke to an attorney there. This attorney assured Wayne that there was in fact no FOI violation in what had occurred.

### **Visitors**

Valerie Andersen said she thought there might have been a FOI concern but now sees that the letter of the law had been followed. However, she suggested that any decisions regarding items discussed that were not on the agenda should be held over and put on the next agenda.

Ms Andersen also hoped there was communication between the Washington Housing Trust and the Housing Commission. Sue Werkhoven pointed out that Liddy Adams was a member of both, so she is able to help keep communication channels open.

Ms. Andersen said the Housing Commission seems to be addressing three basic categories of housing needs: senior, moderate, and affordable. She defined moderate as serving workforce needs which she feels is addressed by the Potter Farm project. She suggested that the Housing Commission not use all their funds for this category of needs but retain some funds to serve the senior segment.

Wayne Hileman explained that there are funds that have been budgeted over the next three years for housing. He said the community has expressed a strong preference for affordable single family homes versus other types of affordable housing. The Potter project offers five limited equity lots whose houses would remain affordable in perpetuity. These would be under the management of the Washington Housing Trust.

Ms. Andersen wondered if the Housing commission couldn't look at reasonably priced houses currently for sale and help qualified people acquire these. Wayne Hileman said other towns have used limited equity housing for quite a while now, thus providing successful models for this approach.

Dick Sears explained that the Housing Commission is not in a position to make assistance available through negotiation with banks. Regarding the definitions of "affordable", the Washington Housing Trust is using those of the state of Connecticut, namely, moderate being 80% of the median income and affordable being 60%. Wayne Hileman said the Housing Commission's fund can be used if projects meet the state's definitions. Oversight of projects will be provided by the Washington Housing Trust, who will screen potential buyers using criteria such as income levels, ties to the community, and credit rating. Dick Sears said there was an upcoming meeting in Marbledale on the Potter project. As such projects continue to be discussed, the town's values regarding housing will be clarified. Don Brigham

felt that the town should emphasize affordable over moderate housing.

### **Senior Housing Survey**

Wayne Hileman distributed a sheet with some preliminary raw data from the Senior Housing Survey. Members discussed various ways to present this data. Don Brigham suggested including a one page executive summary and the main highlights. Wayne Hileman said there was still some additional data that hadn't been tabulated yet. He asked members to start thinking about how to catalog the qualitative survey information, i.e., the written comments. Also, they should be considering what format the report should have.

### **Deed Restrictions**

The state of Connecticut DECD has endorsed the commission's idea of having re-assignable deed restrictions at Ellsworth, so that there is the flexibility to designate different units at different times as affordable.

Also, the DECD affirmed that Starberry Farm's caretaker apartment can be deed restricted separately from the rest of the building, thereby allowing only the dwelling to be affected.

### **Incentive Proposal**

The agenda item V11 B under Incentive Proposal was tabled until the next meeting.

Don Brigham asked that the Housing Commission eventually consider doing a General Housing Survey.

### **Adjournment**

Jean Suddaby moved to adjourn the meeting. Don Brigham seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

**The next scheduled meeting is Monday, January 8, at 5:00 p.m. in the Land Use Room, Town Hall.**

Respectfully submitted,

Patte Doran