

Town of Washington Special Town Meeting

Bryan Memorial Town Hall, Washington Depot, CT

Moderator: Nick Solley & Clerk: Mary Anne Greene

June 21, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

VOTE RECORD

CALL to ORDER: First Selectman, Mark Lyon, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Lillian Lyon nominated Nick Solley for Moderator with second by Jay Hubelbank and passed unanimously.

WARNING: Town of Washington, Special Town Meeting
The voters and electors of the Town of Washington are hereby warned that a special town meeting will held on Thursday, June 21st 2018 at 7:30 p.m. at Bryan Memorial Town Hall, Washington Depot, CT to consider and act upon the following:

- 1) To approve the appropriation of \$70,000 from the Washington Housing Fund to the Washington Community Housing Trust to supplement the State of Connecticut's grant of \$480,000 to develop the Vincent property in New Preston. Funds will be used to renovate the existing house and to construct two new homes.

Dated Washington, CT this 31st day of May 2018
Mark E. Lyon, David A. Werkhoven, Jay Hubelbank
Board of Selectmen

RESOLVED: The Town of Washington shall approve an appropriation not to exceed \$70,000 (seventy thousand dollars) payable to the Washington Community Housing Trust for the sole purpose of providing three affordable single family homes at 181 New Milford Turnpike. Release of these funds has been approved by the Board of Finance and will coincide with the release of a \$480,000 (four hundred eighty thousand dollars) grant from the State of Connecticut Department of Housing.

Motion: Mark Lyon

Second: Howard Drucker

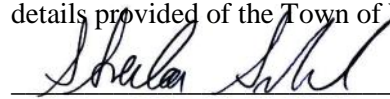
Discussion: Linda Frank, West Shore Rd, New Preston
Jennifer Averill, Calhoun St, Washington Depot
Pete Tagley, Sabbaday La, Washington
Valerie Andersen, Blackville Rd, Washington Depot
Larry O'Toole, Kielwasser Rd, Washington Depot

Discussion cont: Kirsten Feldman, Whittlesey Rd, New Preston
Sandy Papsin, Mygatt Rd, New Preston
Kevin Comer, Roxbury Rd, Washington
Melinda Dubow, Roxbury Rd, Washington
Carolyn Klemm, Old North Rd, Washington
Michael Jackson – Board of Finance
Patsy Matthews, Bee Brook Rd, Washington Depot
Rob Grossman, Barnes Rd, Washington Depot
Diane Williams, Quarry Ridge Rd, New Preston
Pete Tagley, Sabbaday La, Washington
Tammy Wyant-Rill, Horse Heaven Rd, Washington

Vote: Passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Nick Solley, second by Howard Drucker, passed unanimously.

I, Sheila Silvernail, certify to the best of my ability the foregoing is an accurate vote record based on details provided of the Town of Washington's Special Town Meeting on June 21, 2018.

 _____ Dated at Washington, CT this 23rd day of June 2018

Town of Washington Special Town Meeting

Bryan Memorial Town Hall, Washington Depot, CT

Moderator: Nick Solley & Clerk: Mary Anne Greene

June 21, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

MINUTES & TRANSCRIPT

Call to Order: First Selectman, Mark Lyon, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Lillian Lyon nominated Nick Solley for Moderator with second by Jay Hubelbank and passed unanimously.

Moderator: Good evening everybody. Before we read the call, we have the same two rules as every town meeting. When you are acknowledged, please state your name with street address and speak clearly. Mary Anne, I'll ask you to read the warning.

Clerk: Warning – Town of Washington, Special Town Meeting
The voters and electors of the Town of Washington are hereby warned that a special town meeting will held on Thursday, June 21st 2018 at 7:30 p.m. at Bryan Memorial Town Hall, Washington Depot, CT to consider and act upon the following:

- 1) To approve the appropriation of \$70,000 from the Washington Housing Fund to the Washington Community Housing Trust to supplement the State of Connecticut's grant of \$480,000 to develop the Vincent property in New Preston. Funds will be used to renovate the existing house and to construct two new homes.

Dated Washington, CT this 31st day of May 2018

Mark E. Lyon, David A. Werkhoven, Jay Hubelbank

Board of Selectmen

Moderator: Thank you, I'll ask Mark Lyon to read the resolution.

M. Lyon: Resolved: The Town of Washington shall approve an appropriation not to exceed \$70,000 (seventy thousand dollars) payable to the Washington Community Housing Trust for the sole purpose of providing three affordable single family homes at 181 New Milford Turnpike. Release of these funds has been approved by the Board of Finance and will coincide with the release of a \$480,000 (four hundred eighty thousand dollars) grant from the State of Connecticut Department of Housing.

Moderator: Do we have a second for that resolution?

H. Drucker: Second.

Moderator: Second by Howard Drucker.

M. Lyon: This appropriation was recommended to be approved by the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance unanimously endorsed it. Our housing fund was set up in Washington some years ago. Currently there's \$297,482 in cash and asset of two \$10,000 home loans for down payment assistance to individuals. There's another \$80,000 that's earmarked for that program. In essence, there's \$217,482 available. This proposal by the Washington Community Housing Trust is to renovate the house that's on the Vincent property next to the New Preston fire house and erect two new modular homes on the remaining site. It has an approved subdivision by our Zoning and Board of Health. They're ready to start. The State doesn't want to be the sole financier so this \$70,000 is a supplement from the town that proves that we support this and that we have something in the game so to speak.

Moderator: Any comments from the Housing Trust?

Housing Trust: [R. William Fairbairn speaking on behalf of the Washington Community Housing Trust, Inc.]

Just brief comments and hopefully answer questions. There's a sheet in the front that gives an outline. What we're going to do is create two new single family homes. There are pictures back there. The State wants them to be affordable so one will be for sixty percent of area median income which is about \$91,000 for 2017. So one will sell for sixty percent of area median which will be in the \$160,000 range. One has to be eighty percent of area median income and that will be in the \$180,000 range. The old farmhouse which has four bedrooms will sell for one-hundred percent of area median income. So this will bring in what we desperately need. All who have followed the Planning Commission and Plan of Conservation and Development, I've pinned on the board page thirteen and fourteen. You can view it on town website. In terms of that document, interviews with commissions and people in town, and the need of the town, eighty percent were in favor of affordable housing for young people. Connecticut is the seventh oldest state in the country. What's happening is the median age is in the low fifties. We desperately need young people to be fire response, ambulance personnel, fill our schools, and do other things. One of the shocking things from a study the Housing Trust did eight years ago of local businesses and schools to determine how many people actually commuted here, we came up with a number over seven hundred. The Northwest Council of Governments of which Town of Washington belongs, came up with a number of 1,056 people commuted to

Washington. Why don't some of these people come live here, serve on commissions, and fill schools? These are goals from the town Planning Conservation and Development. Pursue outside funding sources for affordable housing and leverage additional public and private funds. That's what we've done. We've got \$480,000 grant from the State to make this work. The other thing which the Planning Commission specifically said was that in terms of this goal was to collaborate with the Washington Community Housing Trust unlimited equity housing. So that's what we're doing. We're coming to you tonight to create three affordable homes that we can hopefully fill with young people right here in town who are renting or those who want to come home to make this work.

There's a couple other things that I think don't get full attention. Most people don't realize that the State of Connecticut has a statute that says that unless you have ten percent of your housing affordable then zoning regulations can be overwritten. So a developer could come in on any property and make thirty percent of the units affordable, then there's no zoning regulations. The only things that would apply are public health codes, septic, and traffic. On this property with good soil, a developer could come in and put a twenty-four unit apartment building, could have put in eight three-bedroom houses. Those are the kind of things that we have to be alert to so it's important to encourage more affordable housing in town to get to that ten percent and protect zoning regulations.

I'd be happy to answer questions.

L. Frank: Linda Frank, New Preston. Are people interviewed for these houses?

Housing Trust: What we'll do is market the houses.

L. Frank: Can you selectively take people with children?

Housing Trust: It's going to be first come, first served.

L. Frank: Is it?

Housing Trust: I have spoken with church ministers, contemporaries, and others telling them to have people call me. We want local people.

J. Averill: Jennifer Averill, Washington Depot. I was just going to ask if preference is going to be given to children who grew up here?

Housing Trust: Yes, with State money we're required to market the property in a certain way, but everybody knows you can tell your neighbors, your friends, and we will get information to you. Local people will probably do very well.

P. Tagley: Pete Tagley, Sabbaday Lane. As a member of the school board I would suggest to everybody that you're going to have to do something. Right now there are thirty-nine children Bridgewater K-5 local students. There's seventy-seven Roxbury, about ninety-eight Washington students. If the school system doesn't grow, the cost per student will go through the roof. We need housing which helps subsidize the taxpayers as well as fills the school and brings down the per-student cost of education. While this is certainly supportive, it's a drop in the bucket compared to what we really need. Somehow we have to find a system because the three towns don't want to give up their primary schools. Costs go up with three buildings. The high school, if the AgStem program works, isn't going to bring enough to support students. So somehow you're going to have to grow the population in these three towns or per-student cost will just keep escalating. So this is an avenue, but we need a much greater effort.

Housing Trust: Again in terms of the need, the Plan of Conservation and Development and actually the Open Space Housing Committee identified the need for about ninety homes. We got a donation of a four-acre parcel from a family here on which we'll possibly do two houses. You're right, we desperately need them. Anybody else?

V. Anderson: Valerie Anderson, Blackville Road. I agree with Pete. I've been on the school board for twenty years. This is a problem that's getting worse. Also in addition, we're all getting older here. It's difficult for some of us to want to stay when we have big houses to maintain. I support this completely. I have a question. I know that the Housing Trust then owns the land and that keeps the cost down.

Housing Trust: Correct.

V. Anderson: We've had a few of those in the past. Please, zoning, let us have some kind of conversation about increasing housing units in general so we old folks who want to sell our houses can still live in this area. We have limited condo and cluster housing. If we can sunset a zoning regulation, a little bit of freedom with zoning to allow development, it would be an excellent approach for young families, middle income families, and certainly older folks. I hope this is the beginning of a very serious conversation because it's been tabled for a while.

L. O'Toole: Larry O'Toole, Kielwasser Road. What happens after the house is purchased? Is it a clear title to the purchaser? What happens after a year or two if purchaser decides to leave town?

Housing Trust: Here's the way it works with limited equity homes. The increase in value is calculated and we manage the property and the resale. We [the Housing Trust] own the land. They'll get ninety-nine year leases. A bank will loan

them money to buy the property. When they go to resell, we make sure it's resold to someone within the appropriate income levels. As the median income goes up, hopefully, and income goes up for people, that will increase the equity in the property. We [the Housing Trust] will manage all the resales to conform to the restricted covenants that the State has put on them.

K. Feldman: Kirsten Feldman, Whittlesey Road. Are you able to choose who goes in the houses so we can have a young family with children versus senior citizens? Is that a choice you have?

Housing Trust: There's fair housing laws so we have to take first come, first served. You remember the Housing Trust bought the Wells property and sold that and a young family with two children moved in there. The sad part was that we had three other applications for that property. These houses will sell for less because we have the support from the State and the town.

S. Papsin: Sandy Papsin, Mygatt Road. Can you tell us the estimated sale price for the current house on Vincent property. What do you anticipate the cost to get that house up to speed considering the environmental cleanup that's required there?

Housing Trust: As part of the process with the State, we have an architect go through, it's inspected, all those things. That cost is about \$97,000 which includes a new roof, renovating bathrooms and kitchen, and the rest.

S. Papsin: So the asbestos, lead paint, mold that's all taken care of?

Housing Trust: If there's any of that, anything there, it will be cleaned up. The whole thing has been gone through. We know exactly what has to be done. It's been contracted out so all we need to do is get the money and close to get it done.

S. Papsin: Is that house the first item on the agenda before the new houses are built?

Housing Trust: We plan on doing them all as quickly as possible.

S. Papsin: So everything will be done simultaneously?

Housing Trust: As quickly as we can, yes.

S. Papsin: What do you expect your time frame to be from start to finish?

Housing Trust: Honestly, I don't know that, but I can get back to you to let you know.

S. Papsin: Just an estimate?

Housing Trust: I'm not sure. The two new houses are modular from Westchester Modulars and I just don't have that information. They are very eager to get this going. We'll get it going as quickly as we can.

S. Papsin: Will all three houses be on individual well systems?

Housing Trust: Yes, every house has it's own well and septic.

S. Papsin: Thank you.

Housing Trust: Thank you.

K. Comer: Kevin Comer, 191 Roxbury Road. Just a couple things. The first is that Kirsten Leon of Bee Brook Road has benefitted from your program. She couldn't be here, but asked me to express how immensely beneficial this program has been for her family. Secondly, I think that we all should be thanking the people on the Housing Trust and the Housing Commission for all the work they've done. Affordable housing is a great thing and hopefully we're all going to vote yes. Thank you.

M. Dubow: Melinda Dubow, 96 Roxbury Road. I was wondering how these houses be marketed?

Housing Trust: The State is part of the process. We have to advertise it in local papers. We have to do it in an urban area which will probably be Danbury. The word gets out and people can start call me tomorrow. I can start getting details. We haven't put the application together yet, but we'll do everything we can.

M. Dubow: Will it be on your website?

Housing Trust: We'll get the notices out there. We'll make sure that everybody in town knows about it.

C. Klemm: Carolyn Klemm. I think it's a great idea. We definitely need more affordable housing. You're only going to have three houses so I think we could find people very quickly. I wondered if you would start a list of people with children. I would think they would come first.

Housing Trust: I don't want to reveal the names of those that have already contacted us. I can tell you there is one young person in town with children. There's another young person, a schoolteacher who would like to come back here. The median price of houses on multiple listing is \$895,000 so under that it gets slim regarding what's available.

C. Klemm: Can I also say, I don't think a lot of people are aware of this. I deal with a lot of weekend New York people many who have become full-time. Many have never known anything about this. I think if the word really got out, you could have some great donations. There may be those with a cottage who would be willing to get a family in there. I think many people want to help, but aren't asked. Maybe have another meeting on a weekend.

Housing Trust: We'll make sure the word gets out.

M. Jackson: There's a lot of young people who are prevented from buying homes because of student debt which means they can't get mortgages. What we're going to do is go to people in town to ask for their support to form a fund to pay off subordinate student debt so they can get a mortgage to live in town.

Audience: [Applause]

P. Matthews: Patsy Matthews, Route 47. Are these houses being renovated for accessibility either for children or adults?

Housing Trust: These are not.

P. Matthews: It's not a bad idea.

Housing Trust: It should. It adds to the cost, but it should be done.

P. Matthews: It doesn't add that much.

Housing Trust: I hear you. It's very difficult to make sure that people are able to stay in their homes if they have a disability. It's very important.

R. Grossman: Rob Grossman, Barnes Road. Has anything been done with the local banks for leniency against student loans for mortgages?

Housing Trust: The Litchfield Housing Trust is far ahead of us in terms of creating limited equity housing. They have worked with us on some of the things. The Litchfield Bancorp is working with us to help. The individuals buying

have to go through counseling. So they've been very good and I'm sure that Union Savings Bank will be able to work with us and National Iron Bank. There are banks that are very helpful. The other thing is the Housing Commission has set aside \$100,000 for \$10,000 down payments. \$20,000 has already gone out. Any individuals buying should be able to get \$10,000 which will reduce the price even more. Down payments don't have to be paid back until the house is sold. That's going to be an added benefit.

D. Williams: Diane Williams, Quarry Ridge Road. We do need young people, but do you think so close to Route 202 could be a problem?

Housing Trust: I had three brothers and we grew up next to some tough places and we survived. Hopefully these are responsible parents.

P. Tagley: Have the selectmen made any effort to work with selectmen in other towns to collaborate in order to make things go further? It sends a much better signal if we could get the three towns [in school region] working together.

First Selectman: We have had discussions and we're ahead of them. Bridgewater and Roxbury don't have funding established yet. They are starting discussions. They are looking at us as the example and hopefully will follow.

Moderator: Any other questions?

T. Wyant-Rill: Tammy Wyant-Rill, Horse Heaven Road. I was wondering how many local contractors will be used to do any renovations?

Housing Trust: The two new places are being done by Segalla so they do everything from the ground up. The general contractor for this is John Aiello who lives on Kinney Hill Road. John uses some subcontractors that are local. The goal is to use as many local people as we can to keep the money in town.

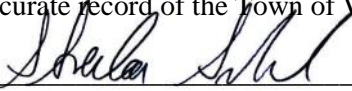
Moderator: Are we ready for a vote? There has been a resolution and a second. I'll just read it again.

Resolved: The Town of Washington shall approve an appropriation not to exceed \$70,000 (seventy thousand dollars) payable to the Washington Community Housing Trust for the sole purpose of providing three affordable single family homes at 181 New Milford Turnpike. Release of these funds has been approved by the Board of Finance and will coincide with the release of a \$480,000 (four hundred eighty thousand dollars) grant from the State of Connecticut Department of Housing.

All in favor please raise hands. Thank you.
All those opposed please raise hands.
It's unanimous in favor. Thank you.

Adjournment: Motion by Nick Solley, second by Howard Drucker, passed unanimously.

I, Sheila Silvernail, certify to the best of my ability based on information provided that the foregoing is an accurate record of the Town of Washington's Special Town Meeting on June 21, 2018.


_____ Dated at Washington, CT this 27th day of June 2018.