

• **November 13, 2006**

Special Meeting

Present: First Selectman Richard C. Sears, Selectmen Nicholas N. Solley and Mark E. Lyon

Washington Community Housing Trust members John Millington, Liddy Adams, Bill Fairbairn.

Press: Ann Compton-VOICES, Rebecca Ransom-Litchfield County Times.

Members of the community.

Call to Order: First Selectman Sears called the meeting to order at 5:03p.m.

Motion: To include subsequent business not already on the agenda. By Dick Sears, seconded by Nick Solley. This will be to announce details of the proposed Potter Farm

Proposition. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session will be dispensed with.

Potter Farm Proposition: First Selectman Sears began the discussion by explaining that last Thursday, the Board of Selectmen met with Town Attorney, David Miles, in Executive Session to discuss this proposition. Although there are still some minor details to be worked out between attorneys and the Potter family, the Selectmen voted unanimously to present the Potter Farm proposition to the citizens of Washington for their consideration at a town meeting in January 2007.

Dick then presented a brief history of the 130 acre Potter Farm and the events that led up to the present decision to sell the farm. Real estate investors have shown interest in dividing the land for development. Several months ago, the Potters approached the Board of Selectmen to ask if the Town might be interested in preserving much of the farmland. Negotiations took place and the following proposition has been developed:

- **Provide five affordable house lots** for single-family, limited-equity homes for ownership by moderate income Washington residents. The Town would purchase these five lots and then turn them over to the Washington Community Housing Trust which will administer the "Limited Equity Home Ownership Program".
- **Limit development on the Potter Farm to six single-family home sites**, averaging 13 acres, with each containing a 3-acre building envelope for a house
- **Preserve 78 acres of Open Space** by placing conservation easements upon 97 acres, thereby permanently preserving 78 acres of farmland.

The cost to the Town will be \$1.5 million (the proposal price is \$2 million minus a contribution of \$500,000 from the Washington Community Housing Trust.) The Housing Commission has recommended \$125,000 from the Affordable Housing Fund be allocated to the project which would leave \$1,375,000 funds needed. One possible solution would be to draw \$375,000 from the General Fund reserves and borrow \$1,000,000 as a loan or a bond.

The 2003 Plan of Conservation and Development and the 2004 Town Planning Process goals of open

space, affordable housing, municipal project prioritization, and control of taxes are addressed by the proposition.

John Millington, Liddy Adams and Bill Fairbairn all spoke of the benefits to the Town of adding these five homes for moderately-incomed families in Town.

Mark Picton asked if there would be control over where the "building envelopes" would be placed in the six home sites. Dick explained the Town would not have control but thanked Mark for his concern about the rural appearance and viable farm land loss if not placed correctly.

Phil Dutton voiced his concern about what the proposed moderate income houses would do to his property value. Housing Trust members assured him house plans would be tastefully done, and would be reviewed carefully before approval given.

Mark Krentzman asked if a prospective buyer offered more for the five affordable house lots than the Town was offering to pay what would happen. If the Potter's accepted an offer of this nature prior to signing the agreement with the Town, that would be their decision.

Sandra Canning stressed the importance of alternative energy considerations as well.

Adjournment: Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 5:52 p.m. as there was no further business for discussion. By Dick Sears, seconded by Mark Lyon and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Anne Greene

Selectmen's Secretary