

May 15, 2013

Special Meeting #2

Present: First Selectman Mark E. Lyon, Selectmen Richard O. Carey and Anthony J. Bedini.

Public: Walter Whitney, Ray Underwood, Joan Gauthey, Lisa Lundberg, Liddy Adams, Leslie Anderson, Chris Charles, Terry Tiernan, Ted Bent, Susan Bishop-Wrabel.

Call to Order:

First Selectman Mark Lyon called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Discussion of the Washington Community Housing Trust's request for Town Funds:

Mark Lyon explained to those present that the purpose of this meeting was to consider the request of the Housing Trust for \$250,000 from the Town's Affordable Housing Fund for the Vincent Property project which involves the purchase and renovation of the present Vincent house, and additional acreage and infrastructure for constructing two modular homes. It is up to the Board of Selectmen to consider this request, make a recommendation to the Board of Finance who, if in agreement, would require a Special Town Meeting for approval by the townspeople. This is the second special meeting the Selectmen have held on this subject and have gained as much information as possible. The Trust approached the Town's Housing Commission first and it was the opinion of the Commission to recommend funding in the amount of \$50,000 – this has since been increased to \$75,000. The Commission felt that the \$75,000 would cover the necessary renovation and repairs to the existing home. They have also informed the Trust and the Selectmen they would entertain future funding for the additional land/homes if the Vincent house portion of the project went well.

The Trust has informed the Selectmen and the Commission that in order to proceed they need the full \$250,000. They purchased the property with a loan from a private individual a year ago and that loan is now coming due. Housing Trust President, Walter Whitney, explained that at the time the loan was made they felt confident that within a year they would raise enough to pay it back – they have not. They are opposed to using State funds and being locked into all that is entailed with that type of funding.

Mark stated he supports the work of all the Town Commissions and his first thought was to support the Housing Commission's recommendation. However, he would not be opposed to recommending the \$250,000 to the Board of Finance, as ultimately it is the decision of the townspeople to approve it – taking it out of the hands of just a few.

Tony Bedini stated his appreciation for all the work that the Trust and Commission have put into this. His opinion, after reviewing plans and information, is to support the Housing Commission's recommendation of \$75,000. This amount would allow the necessary work to be done on the Vincent house. If this first stage of the project is successful, the Trust could request more funding and take it step by step. Tony also feels that the Affordable Housing Fund should not be entirely used on one project.

Dick Carey stated his opposition to recommending the \$250,000 to the Board of Finance and

agreed with Tony Bedini to take this project one step at a time in a volatile market, etc.

Motion:

To recommend to the Board of Finance, an allocation of \$75,000 from the Affordable Housing Fund to the Washington Community Housing Trust.

By Dick Carey, seconded by Tony Bedini.

Further Discussion:

Walter Whitney explained that if they do not receive the \$250,000, they will have to sell the property as is, and abandon the project all together. This project, in the Trust's opinion, would demonstrate Washington's support of limited equity housing and this project is an excellent opportunity.

Mark Lyon reminded the Trust and those present, that the Board of Selectmen can make a recommendation to the Board of Finance but interested parties are also welcome to attend and comment.

Chris Charles voiced his opinion that should the townspeople vote this project down, it is not an indication that Washington is not supportive. He, personally, feels the project should be more thought out and that there have been missed opportunities. He also mentioned the property being in a business district, which could result in adjoining properties being developed – would homeowners on the Vincent property want this?

Discussion continued with various members of the Housing Trust – Ray Underwood and Ted Bent – voicing their reasons the project should be supported. Ted Bent had been a member of the Housing Commission prior to his joining the Housing Trust. He feels strongly that in the years since the Fund has been established, monies have not been allocated for any project and this is a perfect opportunity for the Town. Ray Underwood explained why, in his opinion, this is a very doable project allowing for home ownership as opposed to renting. A great deal of work has already been done on the project and it would be tragic to have it stopped. He requested the Selectmen make the recommendation to the Board of Finance for the full amount requested and leave it up to the townspeople to decide if it should be approved. The Selectmen also expressed their disappointment in being made aware of this critical timing to repay the loan only recently. It was Mark Lyon's understanding when representatives from the Trust met with him nearly a year ago, that the Trust owned the property and he was not made aware of a loan coming due now. If this information had been conveyed earlier, the Housing Commission and the Selectmen may have considered the matter differently. The Trust assured the Selectmen there was no intent to withhold information.

General discussion continued.

Motion:

To withdraw the motion to recommend an allocation of \$75,000 from the Affordable Housing Fund to the Board of Finance.

By Dick Carey, seconded by Tony Bedini and unanimously approved.

Motion:

To recommend an allocation of \$250,000 from the Affordable Housing Fund to the Board of Finance for the Washington Housing Trust Vincent Property Project. Final approval to be at a Special Town Meeting.

By Mark Lyon, seconded by Tony Bedini and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Anne Greene, Selectmen's Secretary

Special Meeting #1

Present: First Selectman Mark E. Lyon, Selectmen Richard O Carey and Anthony J. Bedini.

Call to Order:

First Selectman Mark Lyon called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

NEW BUSINESS:

Motion:

To extend a Request for Proposals for the construction of the boiler room and basement modifications in Bryan Memorial Town Hall.

By Mark Lyon, seconded by Tony Bedini and unanimously approved.

Adjournment:

Motion:

To adjourn the meeting at 8:35 a.m. as there was no further business for discussion.

By Dick Carey, seconded by Tony Bedini and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Anne Greene
Selectmen's Secretary