

June 8, 2021

Senior Housing Alternatives Study Committee

Special Meeting Minutes

Meeting hosted via Zoom.

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 9:35am by Chairperson Stave.

Roll Call: Alexa Gorlick, Sondra Astor Stave, Eric Trott, Richard Brand, Valdis Vinkels, Roberta Wilmot, Aline, Laura Bradley, Richard Brand

Adoption of Minutes: A motion was made by Valdis Vinkels and seconded by Christine Patee to adopt the minutes of May 25, 2021 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

News and updates:

- Later this month allowance will continue for hybrid meetings. Staff will follow up with the Committee on how accommodations can be made for in person meetings with part of the group in the annex while some are on Zoom.

Project Funding Sources:

The Subcommittee discussed potential funding sources and reflected on both the Button Hill project in Willington and the Orchard Hills Estates project in Coventry. The following are reflections on those subjects:

- CDBG Funding is a long/slow process and a large application. Button Hill took over three years to gain funding through State of CT Dept. of Housing.
- There is an immense need for low-income family housing in the State.
- There are very few Section 8 vouchers distributed and the waiting list is very long.
- Button Hill and Lebanon are good examples of desired projects. How Willington senior housing facilities were established was described. Fed home loan and grant/loan dept. housing. Land is leased from the town for \$1 a year. The Housing Authority does the maintenance and rarely contracts out work. Button Hill's funding is an example for Coventry's future project.
- Christine recommended contacting Rene Dobos who is working on a project in Fairfield for consulting advice. Also asked for the Galeys to be notified of SHASC meetings.
- According to Laurie, only 1/3 of people who are interested in senior housing actually end up in senior housing.
- An applicant does not have to be a resident of Coventry to be on OHE housing waiting list.
- Waiting lists for senior housing at minimum are 1 to 2 years.

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- It is critical for the Town to provide suitable land for future project.
- It was suggested that the Town send a letter to the Archdiocese of Norwich with a proposal to purchase the excess land at St. Mary's Church. This could serve as a target for a project.

Coventry Housing Authority – Orchard Hills Estates:

- HUD housing - 30% of income includes medical expenses, beyond 3% of income - 40% medical credit - utility allowance - HUD pays rest.
- State housing (40 units) - 30 % of income. No subsidy except for a few elderly assistance program from Department of Housing. This program is being phased out.

Community Survey Analysis:

- Christine had several questions on the survey that were responded to by Mark, but there still appears to be ongoing questions about some of the data and assumptions. This will be discussed in more detail at the next meeting.

Status of Preparing Draft Report:

- Mark sent Eric a draft of the report. There is still some text to be added, but the document can serve as the working draft and be reviewed by the Subcommittee. Eric will send out this week.
- Eric discussed the importance of the study to contain comprehensive details on all aspects of senior housing that the Subcommittee has considered. The study needs to tell the full story, and assume that the reader knows nothing about the subject. The Town Manager agreed with this approach as the report will be a policy setting document for the Town Council, now and in the future. The goal is to have the report synthesize all the opinions, data, background, and recommendations in a user-friendly, readable manner, similar to the POCD.

Next Steps:

- Review working draft and prepare comments

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Next meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for June 22, 2021 at 9:30am.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 10:51 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexa Gorlick/Eric Trott

Town Staff