

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2020
7:30 P.M. – COMMUNITY CENTER**

First Selectman Matt Hoey called the meeting order at 7:32 p.m.

Present: Board Members: Matt Hoey, Charles Havrda, Susan Renner,
Louis Federici and Sandra Ruoff

Town Officials: Town Planner George Kral, Board of Finance
Member Robert Hartmann and Clerk Traci
Brinkman

Others: Tom Cruess, Executive Director of NeighborWorks
New Horizons, Ron Penton of LaRosa Building
Group and Karin Patriquin of Patriquin Architects
and about 20 people in the audience

Media: New Haven Register Reporter Meghan Friedman
and Mike Graziano, taping for GCTV

- 1. Public Hearing to receive public comment on the possible sale to Mutual Housing Association of South Central Connecticut, Inc. d/b/a NeighborWorks New Horizons (NWNH), of an unimproved parcel of land, shown as Lot 15 on Assessor’s Map 33, and known as 268 Whitfield Street and 41-45 Stonehouse Lane, for purposes of an affordable housing development, pursuant to the terms of the Town RFQ/RFP #1-1819, NWNH’s awarded proposal, and a Development and Land Disposition Agreement (Agreement).**

Mr. Hoey explained that the Board of Selectmen approved a contract with NeighborWorks New Horizons contingent up a public hearing and a town meeting vote on February 11.

Ms. Ruoff, Chair of the Housing for Economic Development Committee and Town Planner George Kral explained the five-year process it has taken to get to this point and how the Woodruff Property was identified as the most suitable location.

Mr. Cruess of NeighborWorks New Horizons explained that (NWNH) is a non-profit housing developer. They operate and manage over 700 units in the state, 34 of those units are in Guilford.

Ms. Patriquin then went over the preliminary design and location of the proposed development, which will be close to transit, the beach, bike paths and is walkable to the center of town. Preliminary plans show five buildings which will have between two to

seven apartments, each with two to three bedrooms. She added that these would mainly be occupied by small families and young couples. She noted that there will be walkways among the buildings. Each building will have two floors. The apartments on the lower level will be wheelchair accessible and the units will all have porches. They will be high efficiency units and constructed to passive house standards with solar arrays placed on the property.

Mr. Cruess explained that the total development cost is \$5.5 million. He went over the various potential funding sources.

Ron Penton of LaRosa Building Group explained that the projected cost would be about \$200 per square foot. The reasons why the costs are higher than a normal home is due to the fact that they will be using different state and federal funding sources that have an extensive list of design features they require. There are strict rules and regulations and those all have a cost associated with it. In addition, they are constructing this to passive house standards so the units will be super insulated and more energy efficient with features in excess of the building code. While this will result in lower energy costs, it comes with a higher cost up front.

He added that while a single building would save money, for aesthetics they have designed the development with smaller individual buildings. They have constructed about 2,200 of these types of units so they know what the costs are going to be. A single building construction that is not passive would cost about \$180 a square foot. Another development they have done costs about \$220 so they are in a similar range.

Mr. Penton noted that this development would not be constructed until 2022. This year they would complete the final design and get approvals through all the regulatory agencies. Next year they would go through funding approvals with construction in 2022 so they are forecasting costs three years out.

Mr. Cruess displayed statistics on the median income in the United States, Connecticut and Guilford. He added that they would be targeting people that are 50-60% of the median income with an average rent in the lower \$1,000 range.

Mr. Ruoff noted that because they would be receiving state and federal funding, Guilford people can apply but the process has to be open to anyone.

Mr. Cruess said Fair Housing Laws do not allow them to limit the units to only Guilford residents, but they do advertise in the community and encourage residents to apply.

Mr. Kral explained that there would be a town meeting next Tuesday for residents to vote on transferring the property to NWNH. If the town meeting approves the transfer, the developer is authorized and required to move forward with due diligence to carry out the project. At some point once grants are secured, the developer will move into a detailed design phase and plan review process with Inland Wetlands, Historic District, and Planning and Zoning. There will be lots of opportunities for residents to have a say

in the specifics of the project design, but the vote next week is only on the conveyance of the property.

It was noted that once the project is completed, the developer would pay real estate taxes to the town. Mr. Hoey estimated that this project could result in Guilford receiving a total of \$60,000 in taxes per year, which is a conservative number.

Questions were raised as to whether the parking spaces allotted would be enough for the development.

Ms. Patriquin stated that the requirement for the number of bedrooms is 1.5 per bedroom, which would yield 24 parking spots, which is what they are showing.

There was discussion on the planting of trees between this property and the Guilford Center for Children. The daycare executive director said she was concerned with a lack of security. Ms. Patriquin added that it is their intention to sit down with the daycare representatives and discuss that.

Another resident questioned if there was a limit to the number of occupants per unit.

Ms. Cruess said the limit depends on the unit. You can not put 10 people in a one bedroom unit.

There was more discussion on the parking. Ms. Patriquin noted that there is another small area they could use as overflow parking if needed. It would just be gravel. She added, however, that normally the planning figure they use usually works out.

There was discussion about drainage and sewage as well as traffic in the area. There was discussion about a need for a buffer for privacy at the Food Bank.

A question was raised as to how long construction would take. It was noted that construction would take less than a year.

Mr. Hoey opened the meeting up to comments from public.

Chris Barrow of 6 Hunter Drive expressed concerns for having an additional 75 people in the area. It would create more vehicular traffic and be a safety concern for pedestrians. There are no sidewalks on Stonehouse and Lovers Lane, if they had 80 more people to the area, he thinks it would be negligent to not put sidewalks on Lovers Lane. He also did not think the parking was adequate.

Laura Davidson of 448 Jennifers Drive said she has concerns about the added traffic within the parking lot itself because of the proximity to the daycare. She noted that construction noise would impact the daily activity of the center and she had concerns about the proximity of the housing to the center. They also have had some drainage issues and she thinks this might make the problem worse.

Alicia Dolce of 301 Old Whitfield Street said she is an advocate of affordable housing and would be a nearby neighbor. She thinks it is an ideal location because it is close to

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public transportation and walkable to the town center and the beach. She noted that she co-owns Green Design & Build in Guilford. She added NWNH, Patriquin Architects and LaRosa Building Group are all excellent and they are a project dream team. She hopes they will proceed and get the approvals they need.

Motion: Upon a motion made by Ms. Ruoff and seconded by Ms. Renner, the board voted unanimously to close the public hearing and adjourn at 8:40 p.m.

*Vote: In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff
Opposed: None
Abstaining: Non*

Respectfully submitted,

Traci K. Brinkman
Clerk
Board of Selectmen