

**COMMISSION ON THE AGING  
4 Brush Hill Road  
New Fairfield, CT 06812**

**MINUTES**

**Meeting**

**October 25, 2011**

A regular meeting of the Commission on the Aging was held on Tuesday October 25, 2011 at the New Fairfield Senior Center. Maureen Salerno called the meeting to order at 7:33pm. Secretary, Laurie Busse, took the minutes.

**Present:** Maureen Salerno, Chair, Cindy LaCour, Vice Chair, Janet Loya, Kathy Hull, Jeannette Sweeney, Stephanie Shaughnessy, and Roberta Ilardo

**Absent:** Bob Alberetti and Katy Johannssen

**Speakers:** Rev. Dick Sears of the Washington Housing Trust

**Guest:** Dr. Rev. Pat Nicholas of the New Fairfield Congregational Church

**MINUTES:** Tabled

**CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**1. Housing:**

Reverend Dick Sears of the Washington Housing Trust gave some back round information about himself, noting he is one of the original founders of the Washington Housing Trust. The Town of Washington CT has 3 senior and affordable housing developments. Pictures were shown of these developments noting they are aesthetically appealing. The first set of housing is Dodge Farm Apartments. Rev. Sears's discussion focused on the River Wood Senior Apartments. These are one and two bedroom apartments that rent between \$650 and \$1,000 per month. The reason they are rentals is because his research has shown that most senior citizens are looking to rent rather than purchase. These apartments are privately owned and built by the Washington Housing Trust. The Washington Housing Trust moved forward with their plans to build affordable senior housing as follows:

- They formed a 50C3 non profit group
- They had meetings
- They had a vision
- They defined their need by discussing what type of housing was needed such as assisted living, owning private apartments or rental apartments.

- They conducted a survey to help define the need of what types of housing were needed
- They changed the zoning regulations in Town by having a higher density as long as they meet the health codes for non profits or governmental agencies. For example, they reduced the 5 acre zoning regulations down to 4 acres because 4 acres met the health/septic codes for nonprofit and governmental agencies.
- They petitioned the Town to change their Ordinances to include a Housing Authority.
- They seized the opportunity. There will never be a good time to start projects but if land or an opportunity comes up, grab it and move forward
- They addressed real fears vs. imaginary fears such as “I don’t want “those” people living in my backyard”. Noting “those” people are not going to come from an inner city and move to the suburbs where there are no services, limited transportation, no sidewalks, and town closes up by 9pm.
- If you do not have affordable housing for seniors you are not a well rounded community.

You can go to WashingtonCT.org and click on the Housing Authority to see their surveys. Discussion focused on why New Fairfield doesn’t have affordable senior housing noting there are two senior housing developments in New Fairfield however they are very expensive to purchase. Tom Dube of the Lutheran Church was adamantly seeking land to build senior housing and came across many obstacles and sources have indicated that the is no longer working on this project. Some good points of reference would be Housing Enterprises in Sussfield CT, and Larry Wagner of Wagner Assoc. The Commission discussed their hopes and concerns if this can be done. One of the biggest concerns is time; it took Washington CT 10 years to get their projects going. Rev. Sears stated the power comes from the Churches and the Senior Centers. He discussed the Local Intuitive Support Coalition (LISC). Discussion focused on Commissioners attending the next Clergy meeting in Town. Once you are able to establish housing you can determine eligibility by using a point system. Points can be given by

- Living in town
- Working in town
- Volunteer in town

## **NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Senior Center Report:** Tabled

## **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday the next COA meeting will be Tuesday December 6.

## **ADJOURN:**

Cindy LaCour made a motion to adjourn at 9:05pm 2<sup>nd</sup> by Roberta Ilardo, unanimous.