

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

**MINUTES**

**Meeting**

**October 22, 2013**

A meeting of the Commission on the Aging was held on Tuesday October 22, 2013 at the New Fairfield Senior Center. Maureen Salerno called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. Secretary, Laurie Busse, took the minutes.

**Present:** Maureen Salerno, Chair, Janet Loya, Katy Johannssen, Roberta Ilardo, Kathy Hull, Jeannette Sweeney, and Stephanie Shaughnessy

**Absent:** Cindy LaCour, Vice Chairman and Julia MacMillan

**MINUTES:**

Roberta Ilardo made a motion to accept the Minutes to the September 24, 2013 meeting as amended, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Janet Loya, unanimous.

**CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Julie MacMillan has been appointed but has not yet had a chance to get sworn in.
- Stephanie Shaughnessy was appointed as a full member.
- The next meeting will be December 3, 2013 due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**1. October Surprise**

The night of our September meeting was Jeannette Sweeney's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. In celebration cake was served as everyone present sang happy birthday.

**2. Fall Community Forum:**

The Commission on the Aging will host the New Fairfield Housing Trust in a community dialogue on housing on Saturday November 9 from 10am to 12 noon. Cindy LaCour will be the Moderator and Maureen Salerno will be one of the panelists. We will not serve refreshments and the selectmen will be invited to attend.

**3. Spring Community Forum**

The Spring Community Forum will focus on helping adult children bring up the end of life talk with their parents. AARP has published a booklet entitled "The Other Talk". Janet Loya will try to get a copy of it. "Healthy Life" published by Hearst Media may also have information on this topic.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Senior Center Report:**

Kathy Hull handed out and discussed the Senior Center report. Highlights included there were more patrons attending the flu clinic than last year and a new astrology class that is quite popular. There are many scams out there regarding the Affordable Care Act. Kathy Hull has tried to make patrons of the Senior Center aware that Medicare recipients do nothing with the Affordable Care Act and if they are contacted by someone trying to sell health insurance or register them, then it may be a scam. Saturday October 26 there will be an Art Show and Reception at the Senior Center from 10am-4pm, it is also New Fairfield Day, so please everyone come and join in the festivities.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Elizabeth Thompson, Rita Drive: She has concerns with senior housing on Rita Drive and submitted a document into the record outlining her concerns. She stated some of her concerns are with water problems. Many residents on Rita Drive have sub pumps and clearing the lot of vegetation will increase water runoff and create more water going into homes as well as the environmental issues of displacing wildlife. Ms Thompson stated that Open Space was not meant to be developed and she thinks that the proposed elderly housing will be located in Open Space. Discussion focused on where Open Space is located and what it can be used for. The Planning Commission is in charge of Open Space. Ms. Thompson stated that she attended the workshop held by the Planning Commission and the Chair; Cynthia Ross-Zweig stated the Planning Commission has nothing to do with Open Space. Ms. Thompson continued stating she is in favor of affordable elderly housing, just not in her back yard.

Maureen Salerno stated that there seems to be a lot of misinformation floating around which is why she invited the New Fairfield Housing Trust to have a dialogue with the community about affordable elderly housing. She encouraged everyone present to attend this dialogue on November 9 at 10am. The New Fairfield Housing Trust is a private non profit organization. The Planning Commission is in charge of Open Space and they should have a map available.

Irene Kohlmorgan, Rita Drive: Rita Drive is a mixed neighborhood with young couples and elderly couples. She inquired if the elderly housing would be for existing New Fairfield residents only. The commission stated that it would be open to everyone. Ms. Kohlmorgan stated the young families have paid significant prices for their homes and she has concerns about HUD coming in and "Those People" moving here from Bridgeport and NY. This will decrease home values significantly. Additionally the residents of Rita Drive are on a community well system and the additional units will be a drain on the system.

The Commission inquired if Ms. Kohlmorgan had been born and raised in New Fairfield and if not, why should she be allowed to move here and not somebody else. Additionally people from NY and Bridgeport won't want to move to a bedroom community like New Fairfield

because there is nothing here for them. There isn't any nightlife and you can't even get a bus to cross the Danbury/New Fairfield border so simple things like going to the mall would be very difficult if they didn't drive.

Gouzel Tokmouline, 67 Rita Drive: Inquired if this project would have State funding and if so, then there would be HUD funding. This will bring in "Those People". If there won't be any State or HUD funding how will the New Fairfield Housing Trust pay for affordable elderly housing?

The Commission again addressed "Those People" and preference will be given to New Fairfield residents. The Commission emphasized that this will be for elderly people only and that folks must be older than a certain age to even qualify. The Commission further discussed that other properties in Town were previously voted down by the Town's people. The Commission again encouraged everyone to attend the Community Forum on Saturday November 9 at 10am.

**ADJUOURN:**

Katy Johannssen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Stephanie Shaughnessy, vote unanimous.

# Attachment- Revd 10/22/13 @ Mtg.

## NOTICE OF CONDITIONS ON RITA DRIVE and KAREN DRIVE

Notice of conditions in Oakwood Acres (Rita Drive and Karen Drive) which have always existed in the area and which will be increased if several acres of land are cleared on the hill above Rita Drive. It is this hill and the high school hill that cause the water problems. 56 Rita is an example of what will happen. When just ½ an acre was cleared on the lot above for a house, new water problems developed on the 56 lot. Clearing the trees and vegetation for any kind of development will cause more run-off into our houses, yards and roads. The conditions are:

1. Water runoff into houses and yards – many homes already have sump pumps in basements.
2. Erosion, soil loss, gravel loss in driveways from run-off, mud in the spring which prevents walking on and usage of yards.
3. Water runs under some houses.
4. Standing water and underground springs exist.
5. Along the top of Rita Drive there are four gullies coming down the hill caused by runoff which fill up during rain storms.
6. Septic systems are redone more frequently in area - one was done three times in twenty years.
7. Brook rises quickly with rain.
8. Road floods in spots.
9. Road drains get clogged from debris in the runoff.
10. The corner of Meeting House Hill School septic field is 300 feet from 11 Rita Drive. It has been acknowledged by selectman Hodge that this septic system has had problems. What happens when another large system is on this hill?
11. Our water bill has always said “no lawn sprinkling and no filling of pools”. What happens to our water table when water is being used above us?

These problems exist in the entire development not just on the top Rita where they are understandably worse.

In order to help other people this housing will cause increased problems for the people in Oakwood Acres.

Non water reasons development would be a detrimental

1. Loss of trees and vegetation and wildlife – we chose Oakwood Acres because of the woods. We have already seen a decrease in wildlife and development will cause more loss.
2. Existing walking trails would be damaged – more trails could be extended here instead of disappearing. Hidden Valley would be adversely affected by any development.
3. Housing would be close to cell tower - tower has devalued houses near it.
4. Devaluation of houses along the top Rita who will see the housing and lose the woods - #15 and #19 will have a two lane road in front of them and along the entire side of their property. #17 has an existing path on it to Meeting House Hill School. This path was approved at a special town meeting on November 28,



1972 with a sum of \$2,500 appropriated for the purpose of making a path from Rita Drive to MHHS for students to walk to school from Oakwood Acres. When a Rita Drive resident inquired at town hall last year about who would clear a fallen tree from the path, selectman Hodge called out from his office that the resident would have to go to the school and the Land Trust to see who is responsible to clear the tree from the path – not the town.

5. Increase in road traffic.
6. Dunham Pond units are not fully occupied. Development was never completed. Land is available there for senior housing with the land cleared and utilities in. Seniors would be in walking distance of stores - they would not be walkers on Rita Drive. The comment was made in a conversation at the public workshop for the conservation and development plan for New Fairfield on October 5, 2013 that "the people in Dunham Pond would not want \$200,000 units in their development".

\*\* At the April, 2012 forum sponsored by the Commission on Aging a speaker answered this question. Can open space be used for affordable housing?

"Open space is exactly that, open space and is not intended to be developed on. It is intended to preserve the land and natural resources of the town. There was a point in time when developers would give the most undesirable portion of the land as open space so most of it wouldn't be developed any way. The Plan of Conservation and Development encourages the Planning Commission to look for open space that will connect other parcels of open space thus making greenways."

We are supposed to have an open space area in Oakwood Acres but none of us know where it is and some of us thought it was this open space above Rita Drive.

This piece of land along Rita Drive, with existing trails and a preserve should be left untouched and preserved as open space as it has been for over 50 years – since it was a farm.

Some questions:

In an April 10, 2013 Citizen News notice for an affordable elderly housing consultant the New Fairfield Housing Trust seeks a candidate who has experience with CHFA, USDA and HUD. The trust describes itself as a non-profit organization.

In a June Citizen News article, written by a member of the trust, it states that the trust is a private company. It said it is not seeking federal money – no HUD.

Which is it? If it is a private company who are the officers? Why does a consultant need HUD experience if HUD will not be involved? Where does the financing for this come from?

How is selling your house and moving into a rental going to help seniors financially? ( It has been reported that these units would be rentals.)