

Town of New Fairfield
Board of Selectmen
4 Brush Hill Road
New Fairfield, CT 06812

MINUTES
PUBLIC HEARING
THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2009
7:00 P.M.
HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY

Members present:

John Hodge, First Selectman
Tom Corbett, Selectman
Ron Oliveri, Selectman

Other Town Officials Present:

Dr. Lisa Low, Grants Administrator
Kathy Hull, Senior Center Director

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by the First Selectman John Hodge.

Selectman Hodge indicated that it is the intention of the Town of New Fairfield to apply for \$300,000 in Small Cities housing rehabilitation funds and that the purpose of today's public hearing is to solicit public comment both on the type of application and on the proposed re-use of program income funds.

John Hodge introduced persons seated at the front table to the audience. This included himself, John Hodge, First Selectman for the Town of New Fairfield, and Selectmen Ron Oliveri & Tom Corbett.

John Hodge indicated that the company hired last year to manage the housing rehabilitation program was Lisa Low & Associates, and that Dr. Lisa Low has come to talk to the town about the program.

It was noted that notice of the public hearing was published twice in the *Danbury News Times*, a local newspaper of daily circulation on Wednesday, February 25, 2009 and again on Wednesday, March 4th and that the notice has also been posted at Town Hall, at the Town Library, and at the Town Senior Center. (A copy of the public hearing notice is attached).

First Selectman Hodge indicated that he had no calls for assistance for handicapped residents with the meeting and thanked the public for coming and then requested that Lisa Low provide an outline of the Small Cities Program, including the activities eligible and the process the Town will follow in making its application to the Department of Economic and Community Development.

Lisa Low noted that there are two primary reasons for the public hearing tonight: to welcome public comment on the town's intention to submit an application for \$300,000 in housing rehab funds to the Small Cities program run by Connecticut's Department of Economic and Community Development and to notify the public of the town's intention to re-use any program income generated from the awarded application to make further housing rehab loans.

Lisa Low explained that the primary objective of the Small Cities grant program issues from the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended. The purpose of the 1974 act was to support the development of viable urban communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities, principally for families or persons of low and moderate income. In order to meet requirements of the program, the federal government has established three national objectives for the Small Cities program. Every activity funded through the program must meet at least one of the following three national objectives:

- A. Benefit low and moderate income families;
- B. Aid in the prevention or elimination of *slums* or blight;
- C. Urgent need. (Activities to alleviate conditions that pose a *serious* community threat).

In addition to meeting a National Objective, selected activities must be eligible under the program. Dr. Low listed some of the activities as alternative applications and indicated that she brought a Grant Administration Manual and Application Handbook with her for review by the public and she invited those interested to review these books and to talk with her further about recommendations.

Residential housing rehabilitation is an eligible & popular activity for small towns under the program. Under the housing rehabilitation program the town provides loans to eligible low and moderate income home owners and renters. Dr. Low then described, in 13 steps, the process for the program and reminded the audience that the town proposes to re-use any program income funds generated by the program for further housing rehabilitation projects through a revolving loan program that would be administered according to the rules and regulations of the CDBG program.

Dr. Low noted that many seniors had come to her talk earlier in the week and had expressed great interest in the program and said in closing that sign up sheets for further information; sample application forms, brochures describing the program, income limits sheets, & business cards for Dr. Low are available at the front desk.

First Selectman Hodge then requested any comments.

Board of Selectman:

Ron Oliveri and Tom Corbett, members of the Board of Selectmen, asked questions of Dr. Low pertaining to the Housing Rehabilitation program, Mr. Oliveri inquired as to when the program began and how many projects had been completed over the past year and in prior years, commenting that the program is obviously highly valuable to citizens of the town.

Public Comment

Many members of the public including Senior Center Director Kathy Hull spoke of what a wonderful program this was and described the need for the program to continue in the town, quoting one senior as saying, "this program has really helped me stay in my home." Ms. Hull and others thanked Dr. Low for all her help in bringing this assistance to the residents of New Fairfield.

Adjournment

Ron Oliveri made a motion to adjourn the public hearing at 7:26 pm. Tom Corbett seconded the motion.

Vote: 3-0-0 (Motion approved).

