



**MEMORANDUM**

**June 12, 2008**

**To: SWRPA Housing Committee**

**From: Benjamin Henson**

**Re: Housing Committee Meeting Summary – Monday, June 10, 2008**

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Hello everyone, the following is a summary of Tuesday's Housing Committee meeting. Committee Chairman Paul Settlemeyer called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM. Present were Anna Duleep, Amy Harris, Tony Lopez, Paul Settlemeyer, Nathan Snyder and Marageret Wirtenberg. Floyd Lapp and Benjamin Henson of SWRPA were also present.

Chairman Settlemeyer presented a copy of the *Workforce Housing Study* that the United Way of Greenwich commissioned. The study is technical in nature and utilizes a zip code analysis to evaluate commute to work figures. The study also estimates the effect commutation has on carbon emission quantities.

Nate Snyder asked if this study was being used to argue that Greenwich is meeting its statutory requirement of maintaining 10% of its housing stock as affordable. Mr. Settlemeyer responded by pointing out that while the study proposes many options for creating additional affordable housing, it doesn't seem that Greenwich will be able to reach the 10% mark.

Tony Lopez asked if the United Way of Greenwich made any attempts to coordinate this effort with SWRPA's. Mr. Settlemeyer explained that this study looked at a very specific target population of Greenwich employees. He also pointed out that the study made the assumption that of the 67% of employees surveyed in the study that live outside Greenwich all commute by automobile.

Mr. Settlemeyer expressed his feeling that the Housing Committee needs to determine a focus in which to channel its energies. He was encouraged that the Environmental Committee has identified issues pertaining to watersheds as its focus.

Benjamin Henson provided a synopsis of the 2008 SWRPA Affordable Housing Summit. Including SWRPA Board and staff members, 131 persons attended the summit. Three of the Region's eight 1<sup>st</sup> Selectmen were in attendance. Mr. Henson prepared a follow-up website for the summit. The website provides visitors: A summary of the summit; brief descriptions of the speakers and their presentations; downloadable .pdf versions of the speakers' presentations; downloadable copies of

the list of attendees with contact information; a link to the AICP page for registering CM credits; and SWRPA's contact information.

The Housing Committee discussed what it viewed to be the summit's key strengths and weaknesses. Among the summit's strengths were:

- Informative, lots of info (IL)
- The website follow-up (AD)
- Started on time, Diane Randall (AH)
- Smashing (MW)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> panel of developments was engaging (PS)
- Provided networking opportunity for some very key housing players (BH)

Some of the summit's weaknesses included:

- Perhaps too much info (IL)
- Wanted to hear Diane Randall speak longer, didn't know all of the presenters, more of "our" people should have attended, wanted more stakeholders (AH)
- Tried to cover too much, wanted examples from 1<sup>st</sup> panelists, rushed to give too much info, no questions were asked of the 1<sup>st</sup> panel (PS)

Discussion made it clear that a more clearly specified objective from the outset will benefit future similar events. This can be achieved by regularly asking of the eight SWR communities: "What can SWRPA do for you?" Mr. Lopez pointed out that many of the events that he has attended over the years include evaluation forms for attendees to complete and return and asked if this was done for the summit. Mr. Henson admitted that this would have been a very helpful item to have included in the planning process. Mr. Lopez asked if we collected emails from attendees. Mr. Henson said that all attendees' contact information was requested and compiled into the worksheet available on the follow-up website. The site's url is [http://www.swrpa.org/swrpa/housing\\_summit.htm](http://www.swrpa.org/swrpa/housing_summit.htm).

Mr. Snyder suggested that instead of a keynote speaker followed by two panel discussions, future summit agenda's should include an initial general discussion followed by the simultaneous, but different break-out sessions. This would allow attendees to learn about topics that most relate to their individual interests.

Anna Duleep suggested including a glossary of housing terms with future summit agenda materials. This would also be a great addition to the Housing Clearinghouse project.

Mr. Lopez suggested extending the summit into the afternoon. Floyd Lapp responded that his experience with hosting these events has taught him that doing so will only result in losing members of the audience. "Regardless of interest, we are all busy."

Mr. Henson said that one thing he heard from presenters and attendees alike was that the commute to Stamford at that time of day was very difficult. A stream of attendees showed up after the advertised start time. He suggested hosting a future event at a location in Norwalk. Cost and technological issues would need to be resolved for this to happen.

It was agreed that presenting a "Housing Toolkit" detailing available incentives and programs and explaining how municipalities can access them might be a great way to proceed forth with next year's summit.

Mr. Snyder proposed a semi-annual gathering of South Western Region Housing Authorities to be organized by SWRPA's Housing Committee. It was agreed that such a peer-to-peer discussion group should be a goal pursued by the Committee. This could also help further define the Clearinghouse project.

Mr. Settlemeyer brought up the need to nominate or appoint a chair of the Housing Committee. Ms. Duleep said that she would be willing to act as co-chair in the interim.

The date and time of the next committee meeting was discussed. Tentatively, the next meeting will occur on Tuesday, August 12, 2008 at 2:00 PM at the SWRPA offices.

Mr. Settlemeyer adjourned the meeting at 3:30 PM.