



MEMORANDUM

Date: October 17, 2008
To: SWRPA Housing Committee
From: Benjamin Henson
Re: Housing Committee Meeting Summary – Tuesday, October 7, 2008

This is a summary of the October 7, 2008 Housing Committee meeting. Committee Co-Chair Anna Duleep called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. Present were co-Chairs Anna Duleep and Paul Settelmeyer, Tony Lopez, Nate Snyder, Dan Wilder, Margaret Wirtenberg and Robert Young. Floyd Lapp and Benjamin Henson of SWRPA were also present.

Mr. Benjamin Henson presented a map showing where 8-30g appeals occurred in Connecticut from 2000-2003. Within this time frame 31 appeals cases were in one of three status: 1) Approved/Construction/Complete; 2) Pending Local; or 3) Pending in Superior/Appellate Court. The 31 developments included 3,285 total units, 940 of which were affordable units. It was pointed out that some Connecticut municipalities are “immune” to 8-30g appeals because more than 10% of their housing stocks are considered affordable. In the South Western Region (the Region), Norwalk and Stamford exceed this criteria. It was suggested that the map also indicate municipalities exceeding the 10% threshold. Mr. Dan Wilder pointed out that Towns with limited or no sewer service (such as Wilton and Weston) are nearly immune to multi-family 8-30g developments because of resultant health issues. Mr. Paul Settelmeyer added that the threat of an 8-30g appeal by a developer in the Region is basically empty due to the various financial restraints to realizing an 8-30g development.

Mr. Henson explained the worksheet prepared for Greenwich to help the Town determine affordability and income limits. The worksheet is useful for determining the unit and the tenant’s eligibility. If Greenwich decides the worksheet is helpful and if other towns are interested, SWRPA could prepare similar worksheets for each. Still, the issue remains that State Statute doesn’t impose strict penalties for not complying, leaving municipalities with little ability to enforce the rules.

The SWRPA website is nearly ready for migration. Once complete, we will be able to put together the Clearinghouse site. The site should be ready by the end of December.

The Towns of Darien and Westport have asked SWRPA to put together a set of case studies of successful affordable housing developments that have occurred in similar towns. Both towns are trying to increase their respective stock of workforce/affordable housing, but have both met considerable opposition from residents and interest groups, who wish to retain the “small town charm” that has long characterized these towns. This topic could and perhaps should be focused upon at the next housing summit. Mr. Henson opined that a panel that could present a set of tools

for making these developments happen in similar environments as well as examples would greatly benefit the Region's Planners, CEOs and housing communities. The challenge is finding a model whose results can be replicated in lower Fairfield County. There seems to be a consensus that Stamford and Norwalk's well established and practiced housing authorities are generating quality affordable housing, but that the smaller towns are struggling to do so. Focusing efforts on these communities makes the most sense.

The date and time of the next committee meeting was discussed. Tentatively, the next meeting will occur on Tuesday, November 18, 2008 at 4:00 PM at the SWRPA offices.

Ms. Duleep adjourned the meeting at 5:20 PM.