



MEMORANDUM

Date: January 16, 2009
To: SWRPA Housing Committee
From: Benjamin Henson
Re: Housing Committee Meeting Summary – Tuesday, January 15, 2009

This is a summary of the January 15, 2009 Housing Committee meeting. Committee Co-Chair Anna Duleep called the meeting to order at 4:10 PM. Present were co-Chairs Anna Duleep and Paul Settelmeyer, Tom Faila, Tony Lopez and Margaret Wirtenberg. Floyd Lapp and Benjamin Henson of SWRPA were also present.

Mr. Benjamin Henson welcomed the Committee's newest member, Tom Faila, Norwalk and gave a background to the affordable/workforce housing event. He explained that he discussed the dates of the April 7, 14 and 21 with Ms. Kathy Harrison of UConn-Stamford. Mr. Paul Settelmeyer pointed out that the week of the 7th is not good due to observation of Passover. After discussion, the Committee agreed that April 14, 15, 16, 21, 22 and 23 should be targeted. Mr. Henson said that he will try to schedule Tuesday, the 14th. Mr. Henson described the new one-panel format and his belief that it will help keep the focus of the event on the issue of affordable/workforce housing in small towns. Dr. Floyd Lapp encouraged the Committee to add a Chief Elected Official, such as Westport's Gordon Joseloff, to the panel. Ms. Anna Duleep agreed that would be a good idea. The Committee agreed that a single, four-person panel is a good idea. Dr. Lapp continues to pursue Congressman Jim Himes to fill the role of keynote speaker. Mr. Settelmeyer said that it would be wise to also consider a strong, visible backup and to schedule our outreach to Mr. Himes around the congressional calendar. He added that the study, From Blueprint to Building: The City of Stamford's Collaborations Creating Affordable Housing, listed a great number of contributors and that it may be a good reference for identifying speakers. Mr. Henson explained that he met with Diane Randall, David Fink, Pat Spring and Liz Verna on Monday during the Blue Ribbon Commission on Housing and Economic Development meeting and that they are assisting his efforts to identify speakers for the event. Mr. Tony Lopez said that it might also be a good idea to have someone on the panel speak to the need of affordable housing for seniors. Mr. Settelmeyer and Mr. Henson agree that topic has been fully covered by many other groups and is not the focus at this point. Mr. Lapp spoke to Chris Bruhl's credentials for serving as the panel's moderator and volunteered to solicit his participation, as well as Mr. Himes' and Mr. Joseloff's. Mr. Faila asked who the intended audience is for the event. Mr. Henson explained that last year's audience included: first selectmen, municipal planners, members of the housing advocacy community, bankers, developers, united ways, boards of education and others. He said that he missed teachers, police, firefighters and healthcare professionals, who are very important and that he wants to ensure that planning and zoning commission and board members and RTM members are invited this year. Mr. Henson asked the Committee to assist him in growing the list of invitees. Mr. Lopez said that a time-keeper to ensure

panelists stuck to format would be helpful. Dr. Wirtenberg added that an info packet to be handed out at the event is a must. Mr. Henson further added that he is preparing an evaluation form to collect feedback this year.

Mr. Henson provided an update on the Blue Ribbon Commission on Housing and Economic Development draft report and recommendations and included the draft's key figures and recommendations. One thing that stood out was the recommendation to increase cooperation with Regional Planning Organizations. He said that he'd like to find out more about the recommendation.

The HOME Connecticut Program has prepared its first annual report, to be available soon. The report indicates which municipalities have applied for, received and plan to apply for incentive zone assistance grants. In the South Western Region, only Darien has received the grant. Stamford and Norwalk are indicated as preparing requests.

Governor Rell issued a press release outlining the State's emergency shelter and fuel plan, especially relevant with extremely low temperatures forecasted to sweep through the State this week.

The Partnership for Strong Communities is introducing the *Housing: The Hub of Public Policy Lyceum Forum Series*, which includes five forums to occur once a month January through May, 2009. Mr. Henson plans to attend two of the five events and encourages other Committee members to attend as well.

Mr. Henson circulated a copy of the *Connecticut Capital Region Homes Sales Report – July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007* prepared by the Capital Region Council of Governments. After discussion, it was agreed that a similar report, prepared by SWRPA for the South Western Region would be a good addition to the Agency's Housing Clearinghouse efforts. Mr. Settelmeier inquired as to whether there isn't someone already producing such a report in the Region.

Mr. Henson presented the summary of the November 18, 2008 meeting. The summary was approved by the committee.

The Town of Darien is in the process of preparing and adopting the *Town of Darien, Connecticut Affordable Housing Plan*. The draft Plan addresses issues regarding moratorium points and the need for affordable workforce housing in the Town.

The date and time of the next committee meeting was discussed. Tentatively, the next meeting will occur on Thursday, February 12, 2008 at 4:00 PM at the SWRPA offices.

Ms. Duleep adjourned the meeting at 5:00 PM.