

**TOWN OF DARIEN
COMMISSION ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 16, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Joe Pankowski, Chair; Amy Squyres, Arden Anderson-Broecking, Ron Heinbaugh, Mary McCarthy, Ray Slavin, AnneMarie Rayhill, Christine Castles

STAFF: Beth Paris, Senior Center

OTHERS: Jan Raymond, Darien Housing Authority; Jayme Stevenson, First Selectman

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Pankowski called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. A quorum was present.

Mr. Pankowski said that the main topic of the discussion would be the upcoming Old Town Homes project.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

• February 17, 2016 Minutes

**** MR. HEINBAUGH MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 17, 2016 MEETING.**

**** MS. ANDERSON-BROECKING SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 17, 2016 MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MATHER CENTER REPORT.

Ms. Paris presented her report to the Commission. (See attached.) Ms. Paris announced that the At Home In Darien presentation on Clutter was recorded and the video is on Channel 79 and also available on Vimeo through the Town website.

HUMAN SERVICES REPORT.

Mr. Pankowski said that Ms. Hauser was not able to attend the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS.

• Old Town Homes

Mr. Pankowski introduced Ms. Jan Raymond, who is the chairman of the Darien Housing Authority. Ms. Raymond said that the final plans have been approved by the Architectural Review Board (ARB) and that building should look very nice. The project is still on the P&Z agenda and there have been two public hearings with another one scheduled for the coming week. Once the plan is approved by P&Z, the financing will be the next step. This means that the project would not be breaking ground until this time next year.

There is a lot of concern among the tenants. The development company, JHM, has done this type of project before. Ms. Raymond said that about 22% of the residents of the Heights were seniors. There were also some disabled individuals involved in the Heights move.

HERC (Housing Education Resource Center) is a housing resource and is a tenant advocacy group. Each tenant will have their own individual representative to advocate for them. This means the tenants do not have to tell the landlord or the development team anything they do not want generally known. HERC will also help with the actually packing of the apartment and move. HERC will also help with others such as forwarding of mail and whether they can take their phone numbers to the temporary residence, or arranging for the storage of furniture if needed. Everything that can be done to make the move as smooth as it can possibly be will be done.

At the last P&Z meeting, there were several tenants who spoke in opposition to the project. Most of this centered around the fact that the tenants will have to move. Ms. Raymond said that the hope was that the tenants would get on board. There has been some positive feedback from some tenants.

Currently, the stairs to the second floor of the existing building are outside and can be icy. The units are small, and the facilities such as laundry are in a different building. The project will be in one building with an increase from 30 units to 55 units and all of them will be one bedroom units.

Ms. Anderson-Broecking said that she was not one of the opposers. She said that the building is beautiful and the floor plan is great. However, there were many seniors who were suspicious about the project and upset about the move.

Ms. Raymond said that the Tenant Meeting on the 22nd was cancelled. Ms. Raymond said the meeting was cancelled because that would be the night of the P&Z meeting. Ms. Raymond said that there may have been a misunderstanding. Originally there was a tenant meeting scheduled along with a Housing Authority meeting, but everyone will be at Planning and Zoning meeting because the Housing Authority is on the agenda. Ms. Raymond reviewed the details surrounding the scheduling a potential special meeting. The April meeting will be held as scheduled.

Mr. Pankowski asked if there was push back expected on the number of units. Ms. Raymond said that they had already had two meetings with the neighbors. She said that there had not been the turn out from the residential neighbors that was expected. Although there were discussions about a number of issues with those who attended the meetings, none of them were directly about the number of units. The major concerns have been parking and landscaping.

Mr. Pankowski said that the Commission was on record as being in favor of this, particularly since there was such a need for one bedroom units for seniors.

Ms. Squyres said that she remembered that there were a number of tenants from the Heights that were relocated to a new residence and then decided not to return. Ms. Raymond confirmed that this had happened. Ms. Squyres asked if the majority of the tenants from the Heights returned. Ms. Raymond said that there were only six tenants that did not return to the Heights and added that two residents had passed away during the construction phase. The current housing waiting list will remain as it is.

Ms. Squyres asked if there was a tenant president at the Heights. Ms. Raymond said that there had been. She added that the tenant associations had the exact same concerns. She said that two newsletters have already been sent out with many questions and answers to address the concerns. (See attached.) Ms. Raymond said that an effort is being made to collect the emails of the families of the tenants in order to keep the families informed.

Ms. Raymond explained that finding rentals in Darien is difficult. She said that with the Heights, most of the tenants were not able to be located in Darien, and suspected that this would also be true with Old Town Homes. When the HERC advocates start, the Housing Authority will help them work towards providing transportation and other issues for residents that are located out of town.

Ms. Squyres asked what the square footage was. Ms. Raymond said that she believed it was more than 700 sq. ft.

Mr. Pankowski asked how long the current waiting list was. Ms. Raymond said that she did not know because it was closed.

Ms. Anderson-Broecking point out that there were some infirmed residents and that had also been some recent tenant deaths. Ms. Raymond said that she was aware of this. Ms. Anderson-Broecking said that many of the questions had been answered but that there were still a number of rumors floating around. Ms. Raymond confirmed that the current tenants had the first right of return.

- **Veteran Benefits**

Ms. McCarthy said that she had met with First Selectmen Stevenson and would be meeting with her again to discuss Veterans Benefits

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Heinbaugh said that he had checked the charter and that the Commission was required to have only 8 meetings a year. He suggested that the February and July meetings be eliminated. Mr. Pankowski disagreed and pointed out that the Old Town Homes project was underway. He said that he had concerns about emailing as an alternative to meetings because it was so easy for people to misunderstand the tone of an email.

Ms. Geddes said that she felt that the February meeting was a problem. Ms. Squyres said that if there was nothing on the agenda, the February meeting should be cancelled.

**** MR. HEINBAUGH MOVED TO TAKE A CONSENSUS IN LATE JANUARY OR EARLY FEBRUARY ABOUT WHETHER THE FEBRUARY MEETING SHOULD BE HELD.**

**** MS. GEDDES SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Heinbaugh said that there was a pool table and ping pong table had been lost in the move to the new center. Ms. Paris pointed out that the ping pong table can be folded up and put away. The pool table can't be folded up and there may not be space for it in the Senior Center. She added that there was a survey that was currently being undertaken about the Senior Center activities and if the respondents indicate they want a pool table, the staff will see what they can do. Mr. Pankowski suggested that Mr. Heinbaugh talk with Ms. Paris and Recreation and Parks about the pool table.

Ms. Anderson-Broecking left the meeting at 9:48 a.m.

Discussion followed about the details of the issue.

Ms. Stevenson mentioned that she had offered written testimony in Hartford on Bill 5363, the Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Process which does not address the inequities of the CGS 8-30g mandate because she believes that this discriminates against seniors. (See attached). The point allocations for senior affordable housing needs to be adjusted. Ms. Stevenson said that she had not heard any response from Hartford regarding her testimony. Mr. Pankowski agreed that this was a major issue and added that senior units should be properly counted as part of affordable housing. Ms. Stevenson said that she believed the State Legislators should remove any reference to an age disparity within the legislation and it should be simply income based. Apparently, the Housing advocates in Hartford are very supportive of the legislation as it was written. Ms. Stevenson said that she had wide support from the other 17 communities in Western

Connecticut. She provided her testimony to the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) and a small town advocacy group.

Ms. Squyres asked who would be making the decision as to who would be eligible for the housing. Ms. Stevenson explained that the housing units would still be deed restricted. Her concern is that under the statute, the point for affordable housing for seniors are allocated differently. She added that she may file a suit in the future because the point allocation is age discriminatory. Mr. Pankowski asked Ms. Stevenson to keep the Commission informed on this. Mr. Pankowski requested that Ms. Stevenson's testimony could be included with the minutes. Ms. Stevenson suggested that the Commission support the testimony with a letter to the Housing Committee. (See attached)

**** MS. GEDDES MOVED TO APPROVE THE COMMISSION'S SUPPORT FOR THE REMOVAL OF AGE DISCRIMINATION FROM Bill 5363, THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING LAND USE APPEALS PROCESS.**

**** MR. SLAVIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pankowski adjourned the meeting at 9:54 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services.

Commission on Aging Report

Darien Senior Programs

March 16, 2016

Respectfully Submitted: Beth Paris, Director

Stamford Hospital is back beginning this month offering and educational/informational programs- because of funding cuts they will be offering the lecture and NOT the complimentary lunch. We are still very fortunate to have the caliber of Health Care Professionals offered to us through the hospital and wonderful pertinent topics offered. Senior Programs has gotten through the budget process. Collaborative Program with At Home in Darien had 98 folks in attendance- British Theater Company had over 100 attendees; Lynn Academy & Irish Luncheon will be capped at 100 participants.

Highlighted & New Classes: The British Theatre of Performing Arts; Conquering Clutter & Getting Organized –Lunch and Learn co-sponsored by Darien Senior Programs & At Home in Darien- complimentary Lunch offered to Darien Residents only

Health & Wellness: VN& Hospice of Fairfield County: One Two Buckle my Shoe Three Four Stay Off the Floor includes complimentary lunch; Ridgefield VNA –Center of Exceptional Care; Stamford Hospital – Senior Foot Health; Caregiver Educational Support Group; Amanda Geffner LCSW : Read and Tell-Good Lit-Good Life; Blood Pressure 1st Monday and 3rd Thursday

Educational & Informational: Art Gottlieb LCSW- Eisenhower Interstate System; AARP Driving Course; Ask a Social Worker; Ask A Lawyer; Ann James presents Veterans Benefits; Darien Library –Poetry Discussion

Creative Pursuits: Garden Club of Darien Pleasure though Plants Program: Wednesday Crafts-Themed: Monday Knitting Circle

Entertainments: The British Theater Group presents a Pantomime of Aladdin; Lynn Academy Irish Dancers & Lunch; Monday Movies; Sedgwick Sisters Sing

Program Days: 22

Caregiver Support Group: 7

Human Services Referral: 9

At Home in Darien: 11

Caregiver Options Counseling: 9

Family Inquiries: 7

EMS Calls: 0

Ongoing Work in Progress

Membership Renewal/ Survey

Newsletter

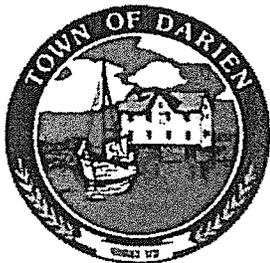
Statistics

Organizing Intergenerational Program with YAT

Emergency Preparedness Program with Health Department April
Late Spring/Summer Program Planning and Development

Meetings Attended: 3/1 At Home in Darien & Human Services monthly meeting; 3/2 Building Use discussion for Fitness Room Development; 3/4 Quarterly SWCAA Senior Center Director Meeting; 3/9 SWCAA Advisory Board Meeting; 3/9 At Home in Darien Full Board Meeting; 3/15 Department Head Meeting; 3/16 COA Meeting

Building Issues: Offering folks BA to ride elevator with them. Complaints about inconsistent riding and bumpy landings; third rail not installed in lobby area; front door locks waiting for upgrade



TOWN OF DARIEN

OFFICE OF THE SELECTMAN

JAYME J. STEVENSON
FIRST SELECTMAN

CHARLES A. KOONS
SUSAN J. MARKS
ROBERT A. RICHARDS
MARC E. THORNE

KATHLEEN CLARKE BUCH, CPFO
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

March 1, 2016

Testimony to Connecticut General Assembly Housing Committee- House Bill 5363

Senator Winfield, Representative Butler, Senator Hwang and Representative Kupchick,

Thank you the opportunity to provide testimony regarding House Bill 5363: An Act Concerning The Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Procedure. I am writing today in opposition to the proposed changes as they do not address fundamental inequities within CT Statute 8-30g.

According to information obtained on the State of Connecticut Department of Aging website, Connecticut has "one of the country's oldest populations" and our "population of those 60 and older is growing more quickly than other groups". Demographers predict that "by the year 2030, nearly 26% of Connecticut's population will be 60 and older." With an aging population comes the responsibility of towns and cities to address infrastructure issues including, but not limited to, appropriate and affordable housing for the elderly.

CT Statute 8-30g Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Procedure lays out a series of steps by which municipalities gain housing equivalency points for deed restricted affordable housing units with the ultimate goal of towns achieving a 10% threshold of municipal housing stock at "affordable" levels according to the definition outlined by the State Housing Commission. Housing equivalency points vary depending on the status of rental versus owner-occupied, the level of deed restricted income as it relates to "Median Income" and whether the housing unit is intended for family versus elderly occupancy.

The intent of the proposed language in Section 1 (8)L(4)B(6) appears to give some marginal credit to elderly units in the land use appeals process, however, I believe that reduced housing equivalency point values, based solely on the basis of age, is discriminatory. As such, the point allocation model has the effect of creating family units as a priority population – a concept inconsistent with fair housing law. There should be no point differentiation for elderly versus family units in the Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Procedure.

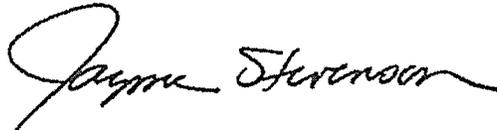
I have two alternative suggestions: 1) Ideally, any reference to "elderly" or "age restricted" should be deleted from the legislation and all affordable housing equivalency points should be allocated based solely on deed restricted income levels, not the age of the intended occupant or 2) all age restricted affordable housing should be allocated at least 1 full point. There are no other classes of affordable housing other than set aside market rate housing units that receive less than 1 housing equivalency point. Additional credit should be given to elderly units depending on the deed restricted income level.

In addition, I respectfully ask the Housing Committee to include deed restricted supportive housing, in particular, housing for the developmentally disabled, in the Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Procedure and to allow housing equivalency points to be obtained for this critically important housing.

State resources are stretched thin. By allowing municipalities to garner appropriate points for housing build to support the elderly and developmentally disabled persons, the legislature has the opportunity to create an incentive for municipalities and developers to provide these important housing resources. Said another way, without appropriate point allocations, CT Statute 8-30g creates a disincentive for municipalities to invest in this kind of housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 5363. I am available to answer your questions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jayme J. Stevenson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

*Jayme J. Stevenson
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DAVID M. ROSEN 1948-1967
JULIUS B. KURIANSKY 1952-1992
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MONROE SILVERMAN 1955-2003
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March 17, 2016

Housing Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
Legislative Office Building Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: House Bill 5363 - Conn Gen. Statute Sec. 8-30g

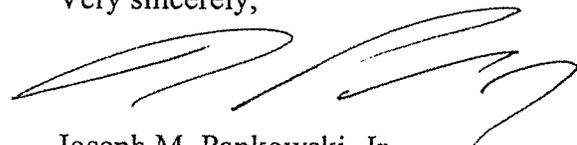
Dear Members of the Housing Committee:

Jayne Stevenson, the First Selectman of the Town of Darien, informed the Darien Commission on Aging yesterday of her testimony before your Committee relating to House Bill 5363 and its proposed modifications to Conn. General Statute Sec. 8-30g. The text of said testimony is enclosed herewith.

On behalf of our Commission, I am writing to advise you that we are fully supportive of Ms. Stevenson's efforts to eliminate the inherent discrimination in Sec. 8-30g against our senior citizens. Specifically, since senior housing receives reduced housing equivalency point values when compared with housing for "young families," Connecticut municipalities are discouraged from creating housing units for our seniors. This is especially exasperating given the fact that Connecticut has a rapidly aging population with many seniors living month-to-month on their social security payments in substandard housing.

In short, the message from the State to our towns and cities is currently "ignore your seniors and build affordable housing for young people." This is legally troubling, but, more importantly, morally wrong. I encourage the members of your Committee to address this injustice during this year's legislative session.

Very sincerely,



Joseph M. Pankowski, Jr.
Chairman, Darien Commission on Aging

Encl.

EDWARD M. KWESKIN
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MARSHALL GOLDBERG
STEPHEN A. FINN
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