

**Town of New Hartford
Commission on Aging Special Meeting
Town Hall 530 Main Street
Wednesday January 9, 2019 @ 6:30pm**

Members Present: Kathy White, Karen Gauthier, Laura Garay.

Special Guest: Lesley Higgins-Biddle, Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC)

Board of Selectmen Present: First Selectman Dan Jerram, and Selectwoman Alesia Kennerson

Members of the Public Present: Diana LePore

Chairwoman Garay called the meeting to order at 6:35pm without a quorum.

Christine Ringuette arrived at 6:37pm. Quorum present.

Penny Miller arrived at 6:47pm.

Absent: Karen Kuhl

I. New Senior Center Director Announcement

Chairwoman Garay announced Diane Barrett as the new Senior Center Director. The new director will be invited to attend the next meeting for the COA to welcome her.

II. Special Guest Lesley Higgins-Biddle Presentation

Discussed began about Ms. Higgins-Biddle's background and the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC). LISC has been under contract with the Connecticut Housing and Finance Department for the past 10 years. Questions were asked about which towns in the northwest corner have worked with Ms. Higgins-Biddle and LISC. In particular, which developments have been successfully implemented from initial planning and design. Ms. Higgins-Biddle indicated the following:

- Most groups study their towns.
- LISC has worked with groups by way of providing survey support.
- It is beneficial to conduct a town survey because it helps to look at the economics of what residents need and why they can't stay in town.
- Municipalities don't usually build senior housing.
- Town owned land is usually not used as it is difficult to acquire.
- The Town of Litchfield has done some work in terms of identifying needs because they realized it was difficult for young people to move back to town especially families with young children,

- A question was posed around what it means to form a non-profit and for what purpose relative to moving forward.
- The Town of Sherman was raised as an example where the need arose to form a non-profit and it was determined that building could not be done by a large developer. Sherman conducted a survey two years ago and that sample will be forwarded for our review.
- When asked, Ms. Higgins-Biddle indicated that a survey could be completed in 3-4 months.
- Follow up questions were posed about what percentage residents respond to the survey and how the survey would best be distributed.
- Ms. Higgins-Biddle said the survey should answer key questions such as, "Do I want to own or rent?", "Do I want a one or two bedroom unit?", "Is there a need for senior housing or non-age restrictive housing?", "Is lack of housing an affordability issue?", or, "My parents need this..".
- The First Selectman discussed the Town of Norfolk and their purchase of a farmhouse.
- He also referenced a newspaper article that described the Holcomb Farm project underway in neighboring Barkhamsted.
- Ms. Higgins-Biddle emphasized that a large developers idea doesn't work in small town Connecticut.
- She indicated that there maybe resistance in the community for this but that Town Meetings are a great way to answer resident's questions.
- In response to a question, Ms. Higgins-Biddle stated that in the past 10 years, 25% of these projects have been age restrictive.
- The chairwoman asked about the process of establishing a 501(3)c.
- Ms. Higgins-Biddle indicated that she will forward a list of projects in the northwest corner that came to fruition.
- A question was posed about any projects that have been stagnating in which Ms. Higgins-Biddle has been involved.
- She followed up by saying that lack of money has not been a barrier in moving forward, lack of leadership at the local level has been the reason.
- The First Selectman asked Ms. Higgins-Biddle to discuss how financing happens relative to seeking grants.
- She added that LISC is also an agency that gives out grants.
- In closing, the First Selectman committed to paying for any costs associated with printing and disseminating the survey.
- A member suggested that the survey solicit all housing needs not just those of the Town's seniors.
- The First Selectman said he would leave the answer to that question to the Commission.
- This portion of the meeting closed with the First Selectman asking the COA to draft a needs survey.

III. Senior Resource Guide Discussion/Take Possible Action

Discussion regarding recommended changes took place. Several recommendations made to modify information in the Resource Guide. Some contact information was updated. All changes were noted to date.

IV. Approval of December 5, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes as presented made by Christine Ringuette and seconded by Karen Gauthier. Motion approved. Penny Miller abstained.

V. Adjourn

Motion by Adjourn made by Penny Miller and seconded by Karen Gauthier. Meeting adjourned at 8:37pm.

Next meeting date is February 6, 2019, 6:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Laura Garay, Chair