

## YRHC Meeting Minutes

Feb. 28, 2007

Meeting called to order 7:03 p.m.

Present: Mark Greene (chair/housing administrator); Steven Train (selectman); Tammy Hohn; Will Tierney; Leah Maloney; Michael Maloney; Jonathan Norton; John Billings; Linda Papkee; Chris Papkee; Justin Papkee; Alden Robinson (Island Fellow).

1. Will Hickock addressed the committee briefly. He discussed the merits of mobile homes/modular homes based on research that he and Steve Train conducted in the past. He suggested that they offer a viable way to get a house constructed for under \$100,000 and left information for further study.

2. John Billings asked how the town planned to determine whom it would give land to. Steve Train explained that the proposal under consideration would lease land instead of transferring ownership, and that its goal would be to increase tax revenue instead of costing the town money.

John Billings said that if the town sold town land outright at market value, buyers would probably build bigger houses on it and generate more tax revenue. Mark Greene said that while that was probably true, preserving a year-round community on Long Island was a key to maintaining our low taxes, since a non-volunteer/non resident town government could be much more expensive in the long run than what we have now. What we have now (a year round diverse community) is seriously endangered by the pressures of the second home housing market which often out competes the abilities of younger residents, who presently do not own property, seeking to remain on the island.

It was also pointed out that if we sell the land now, we have no way of guiding its future use towards the good of the community. It was also noted, that if these community oriented goals are no longer necessary in the future, the land can always be eventually sold. This concept offers a chance to get some of this property back on the tax roles and support the goal of helping our own citizens stay here and hopefully continue to contribute to the well being of all.

#### New Business:

1. Mark Greene said that Rep. Hannah Pingree's bill LD 763 has a public hearing in Augusta on Friday. LD 763 would impose a 1% transfer tax on real estate transfers over \$500,000, the proceeds of which would go to fund local affordable housing efforts. Although it will generate very little immediate money for island use, in the future if property values continue to climb and bigger houses get built, it could become a source of some assistance. Mark asked the committee for permission to speak on their behalf in favor of the bill. The committee agreed unanimously.

2. Mark also asked for a volunteer to be listed on the board of the Year- Round Housing Committee when it incorporates as a 501©3 charitable organization. Mark Greene and Steve Train had already volunteered to serve as board members; Leah Maloney volunteered to be the third.

3. The new housing proposal was then outlined, which had been discussed previously with some committee members to gauge its practicality. It was noted that this is major change from the original proposal floated in the surveys sent out recently to all residents and property owners. The time frames involved for the original proposal (build a rental house on town owned land) were years long and had many hurdles to clear, not the least of which was the obtaining of grants, loans, etc. and actually getting the house built. According to early survey returns, we have a number of our present citizens that need housing solutions quickly and the new proposal has a much quicker time element.

The following is a summary of the many questions and ideas that were floated in the discussion. Please keep in mind that these are just preliminary ideas to stimulate a more refined proposal by the YRHC and if acceptable, for eventual Town Meeting consideration.

The proposal would involve asking the voters to lease certain parcels of town owned land to eligible island residents. Under this proposal, the Year-Round Housing Committee, using guidelines as yet to be developed, would select candidates to lease a parcel of town land on condition that they build and occupy a year-round home on the land. The annual lease for the parcel would be set at equal to the amount the parcel would generate in taxes at its full

and current valuation the same as any other parcel of private, residential land on the island. In addition, the lessees would pay taxes, as any other homeowner, on the houses built. The lease on the land would continue as long as the conditions of the lease, also as yet to be developed, continue. An example of a possible condition would be continued year occupancy by lessee. If the lessee decides to sell the house or can no longer meet the conditions of the program, the YRHC or the Town or both would have first refusal to purchase the house at a predetermined value which might take into account standard per square foot building values. Resale price calculators would be determined by guidelines specified in the lease to preserve its affordability, yet preserve the investment that the owners have put into the house. The house might then be available for resale to the next eligible candidates, if interested.

4. The committee was generally in favor of studying further the leased-land model. They discussed the mechanics of reselling the house and how the price should be determined. Steve Train said that the proposal the committee brings to town meeting should be flexible in the parcels of land it incorporates.

5. A map of possible parcels was discussed; it was suggested that two parcels near the school might be best to start with since they are conveniently located and wouldn't require building a road like other parcels at the east end. Several other parcels are not yet legally cleared as fully town owned, but are in the process and may also be considered later.

6. Leah Maloney asked who would perform perk tests to the properties to determine their suitability for building. Steve Train suggested that the town could pay for the tests initially and if successful, the tenant could reimburse the town later.

7. The committee agreed to consider criteria for eligibility for its next meeting. Members were asked to bring their ideas for proposed criteria to the next meeting along with other questions about refining this proposal. Next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 14th at 7 p.m. Meeting adjourned: 8:25 p.m.