

**TOWNSHIP OF WALL
CITIZENS COMMITTEE ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING
MINUTES OF MEETING**

December 14, 2009

Present: Robin Cervantes, Chairperson, Karen Barbagelata, Vinny Marron, Susan Miles, Lauren Nikola-McCaffrey, Committeeman Clint Hoffman, and Board of Education Member Michael Bogner

Absent: Ronald Jennings, Henry Sprance

Public: 11 present

At 7:02 p.m. the meeting was called to order.

Mrs. Cervantes introduced Carol Wolfe, Director of Dottie's House. Ms. Wolfe provided a history of Dottie's House, as well as domestic violence in Ocean and Monmouth Counties. One in three teens will be a victim of domestic violence.

When Dottie's House was first opened, some neighbors expressed concern about safety; so far, there have been no problems near the facility. Dottie's House is one of two recognized facilities addressing domestic violence in the United States. In the event of a threat to a resident, the police would immediately be notified. Police in the area tend to patrol the facility frequently, anyway.

Referrals to Dottie's House come from Providence House and Turn 180. There is an extensive screening process, and the social workers must be convinced that the patron is ready to change her life. There must be no drug or alcohol abuse, and to insure no problems random screenings are done. DYFS is notified if there are parenting issues. There are spot checks in the home for cleanliness. Dads are never allowed on site, they meet their children at the police station for visitation.

In response to a question from the audience, Ms. Wolfe indicated that at the completion of their term at Dottie's House, the resident can go into affordable housing. Each resident has picked up skills, and leave self-sufficient. Assistance is provided to help them find a permanent home.

Mrs. Cervantes inquired as to the success rate for those that complete the program. Ms. Wolfe indicated that it's truly case by case, but is at least 35% or higher.

Mrs. Cervantes inquired as to the land requirements. Mrs. Wolfe stated that Dottie's House sits on 2 acres, and looks like a mansion from the street.

Committeeman Hoffman indicated that each unit accrues apartment credits, but that it's not a 2 for 1 credit as it would be for handicapped residences.

Committeeman Hoffman inquired about the occupancy percentages. Mrs. Wolfe replied that for the most part, Dottie's House is fully occupied.

Mr. Marron asked about age requirements for each unit. Mrs. Wolfe advised that the parent and children under the age of 18 are allowed to reside in the unit.

Mrs. Wolfe departs.

Mr. Hoffman advised the CCAH that on Monday, the Wall Township Planning Board passed the amendment to the Affordable Housing Plan. The Township Committee passed the plan on Wednesday. Next, the Amended Plan is sent to the Judge and Special Master. The Order of Protection stands until the Judge rules on the plan. The belief is that the Judge will maintain the Order of Protection even if he rejects the Amended Plan.

The Planning Board has been granted the authority to purchase the Holly Boulevard property, provided the DEP issue is cleared by December 31, 2009. Committeeman Hoffman believes that we'll know whether or not to proceed by December 31. The DEP issue is a drainage ditch on the property from Route 34, and that ditch potentially could be considered a wetlands. The tax credit granted to the sellers is no longer available on January 1, 2010.

An audience member wondered that if the DEP doesn't respond before the December 31 deadline, if they deal would be void. Mr. Hoffman noted that Wall Township can condemn the property, which could benefit all parties. But the tax credit ends on 12/31/09, thus the purchase price effectively drops by \$1,300,000.00. The Holly owners could pull out of the deal.

Committeeman Hoffman noted that if it's cost effective to remediate the issue, Wall can consider buying the property before the deadline and fixing it. The drainage ditch attacks the value of the property, which hurts the sellers. Nothing in the process is black and white, but once the Holly site problems are specified, the Township can use its best judgment.

A member of the audience inquired as to the Judge's likely reaction to the failure of the Township to acquire the Holly site. Mr. Hoffman believes the Judge will be reasonable, as the problem was newly discovered.

An audience member asked if the properties in the Amended Plan are specific as to which projects are planned for which properties. Mr. Hoffman replied that the Plan is specific as to year one, 235 units. Wall has Atlantic Manor Apartments, Bearmore, 1 Habitat home, Sunnyside and Colfax specified as to usage. There's a gap of 150 units. Wall has Schwartz, Olympic and Holly in the plan for future use. Holly was the best bet because there was already an approved site plan in place. The choice of seniors there was logical, since seniors have less of an impact on the infrastructure. The property has value, so even if the COAH issue vanishes, Wall Township could flip the property.

A member of the audience asked if Dottie's House was being considered. Mr. Hoffman indicated that all possibilities are being considered, because now that the Township has a plan, the plan can be tweaked to include projects like Dottie's House.

Committeewoman Conte, a member of the audience, indicated that she has seen the Chambersbridge residence, and that it's beautiful. She encourages everyone to visit and see what mixed use housing can be.

Mrs. Cervantes inquired as to the schedule for meetings next year. After discussion, it was agreed that meetings in 2010 would be moved to the 4th Monday of the month.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m. The next meeting is the fourth Monday in January, January 25, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Wall Township Municipal Building, 2700 Allaire Road, Wall, New Jersey.

Karen Barbagelata
Secretary