Members Present: B. Hoag (by phone), B. Ackerman, F. Copsidas, C. Faure, K. Harrison, T. Hollander

Members Absent: H. Bray, D. Tuck

Also Present: Dr. Andrew Millar, Catherine Cooke, James Philipakos, Anita Brown - New Fairfield Senior Housing Committee, Julie Astbury, M. MacKinnon - Commission Clerk

Call to Order: K. Harrison called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

Approval of January Minutes:
Motion to approve January 21 minutes as amended by B. Ackerman. Seconded by F. Copsidas. Vote for: Unanimous.

Correspondence:
K. Harrison read an email from Paul and Julie Astbury regarding the work of the Housing Commission. They are interested in a senior housing solution and are willing to volunteer to move the committee’s work forward.

Old Business:
A. Does the Housing Commission (HC) need a mission statement? B. Ackerman offered that a mission statement may be needed if official paperwork was being filed. K. Harrison reminded everyone the HC is only an advisory committee. B. Hoag stated he had nothing further to add.

B. Further developments regarding a nonprofit organization that would be separate from the Housing Commission but would work closely with the Commission. F. Copsidas thought it was a bit early to do this, however, it is a task the HC needs to complete at the appropriate time.

C. Possible Membership in the new organization. No discussion.

D. Discussion of reactions to the housing article published in The Sentinel. No committee members received any feedback on the article.

E. Further discussion regarding taking another survey to confirm both the level of interest in Sherman and the percentage of seniors who need housing. F. Copsidas and T. Hollander both agreed a more precise survey is required to pinpoint size of units, number of bedrooms, and the cost, and then present this information to the town. F. Copsidas speculated it may be too early to survey again, that until possible housing scenarios and floor plans could be shown the seniors, a survey may not uncover what seniors truly want and need. Another consideration is speaking to
younger residents who might want senior relatives to move to Sherman. Anita Brown stated this was helpful information for her.

F. **Discuss meeting held with the Senior Center personnel.** F. Copsidas and T. Hollander attended lunch recently with the seniors. A poster of Ridgefield’s senior housing complex was shown and there was a positive response. It may be prudent to issue the next survey at the Senior Center itself. Feedback from the Seniors was that they want units significantly less than the 1300 square feet that was typical of the apartments that we visited in Ridgefield. After the meeting B. Ackerman received several calls from seniors urging the town to move forward.

G. **Report from B. Ackerman and T. Hollander regarding their attendance at the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting on February 7.** B. Ackerman reported they received an enthusiastic response and the suggestion to visit more complexes.

H. **Discuss the affordable housing recently viewed, via drive-by.** F. Copsidas reported meeting with the developer of a complex in Ridgefield. The land was purchased and a small parcel was donated. A developer financed, built, maintains and runs the complex. He shared a picture of the complex which commissioners felt suited the desired architectural design for Sherman. The first unit is 8 years old and 5 of 18 units are deemed affordable. A connecting building with an elevator is planned, so if one elevator is down another could be used. Units are 1300 sq. ft. and rent is $2600/month, and includes a basement storage unit and a concierge service to clean snow off cars and perform garbage pickup. If totally private, without any affordable units, the rent would be $2300. There are no medical services on site. Garages would add $200 or $300/month in rent. K. Harrison reminded everyone Sherman seniors are very interested in cost effective solutions. B. Ackerman reported Ridgefield has a long waiting list of locals and that anyone who moved into the complex from out of town did so because they were parents of local residents.

**Public Comment:**
K. Harrison invited several guests in the audience to comment. Dr. Andrew Millar moved to Sherman a few years ago. He is a semi-retired chiropractor and drives for FISH. He offers another perspective to the commission. Catherine Cooke has been a resident since 1983 and has landscaping and architectural experience. She was a member of the original commission and would like to become involved again. James Philipakos moved here in 2003 and works in bank financing. He offers experience with financing options and insights and outcomes from building an in-law apartment in his house. Alex Mace was invited but did not attend.

Julie Astbury recognized initiatives take time to unfold and questioned why further progress hadn’t been made in light of the work done by previous commissions. B. Ackerman stated much had been accomplished in recent months. C. Cooke will review and provide copies of any electronic files of value from prior commission work.

K. Harrison invited Anita Brown to comment. A. Brown commended the commission on its work to date and reported New Fairfield is also planning a survey. She gave an overview of work her group has been doing.
New Business:
K. Harrison summarized next steps:
- enough drive-bys have been done
- visit Ridgefield again before April meeting and get answers to remaining questions
- visit Senior Center again between April and May; K. Harrison to participate in this visit
- B. Ackerman to contact Senior Center for a meeting date, which will be circulated to the commission

Adjournment:
K. Harrison moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 PM.
B. Ackerman seconded the motion.
Vote for: Unanimous.

The next meeting will be April 15, 2019 at 5:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:
Michele MacKinnon
6 March 2019