

## SEEKONK PLANNING BOARD REGULAR MEETING

### MINUTES January 25, 2011

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Present: Ch. Abelson, M. Bourque, W. Rice, R. Bennett, S. Foulkes and L. Dunn, T. Clancy  
J. Hansen, Town Planner

Absent:

7:00 pm Ch. Abelson called the meeting to order.

#### **Discussion: Assisted Living Facility Bylaw**

J. Hansen Mr. Mark Shane is here tonight to introduce himself to the Board and discuss his plans to build an assisted living facility in Seekonk. He owns and operates an assisted living facility in Swansea.

Mark Shane Good evening I am the owner and general contractor for Swan Brook Assisted living in Swansea. We have been in operation in Swansea for 18 years and have 33 residents in 28 private units. We are looking to expand. We have done market studies and looked in different areas and Seekonk was the first area we would like to move into because there are no assisted living facilities this side of Rhode Island. We are privately owned. After talking with Bernie Huck she informed us that many Seekonk residents have to leave Seekonk and go into RI for assisted living. We are serious and have received a letter of intent to secure the finances to build a 7 to 8 million dollar facility. We are proposing to build a 84- unit, one floor only cottage style living built in 4 different stages which is approximately 6 cottages with a common community center. Not a big user of services from the community will not add to school system etcí Have are own staff. We are not big enough to cause traffic problems. Any questions?

Ch. Abelson What size parcel would you be looking for in Seekonk?

M. Shane Donot know yet we would have to look at perspective parcel and layout the one story cottage buildings and see how they fit. We would like six cottages three on each side with a community building in the middle. We would have to work that into whatever requirements you have with setbacks etcí

Ch. Abelson Looking for residential area?

M. Shane It could be anywhere however we donot want to be next to Home Depot or anything like that. We like to blend into a community. Want to build in an area that would be similar to the homes they are leaving.

- Ch. Abelson Any age requirements?
- M. Shane 62 and older we want this to be a senior facility. All the programs are geared for seniors.
- S. Foulkes This is not for independent living correct?
- M. Shane Strictly assisted living the stage before nursing care is needed.
- L. Dunn How many acres in Swansea?
- M. Shane 1.18 acres. Our neighbors are important to us. Mostly people from the immediate area come to live in these places. Single most important factor to people choosing assisted living is the location it is close to home, friends and family.
- S. Foulkes What is percentage of people from Swansea that live in the facility?
- M. Shane More than 50% from Swansea then Somerset then a little farther out. If we were to build in Seekonk our number one priority would be Seekonk residents first then if there are still rooms we would look further we don't want to leave rooms vacant.
- L. Dunn Can husband and wives come and live together?
- M. Shane We have units that vary, from studios, one bedroom to two bedrooms. We try to keep couples together if their health allows it.
- R. Bennett I would like to take a look at Swan Brook.
- M. Shane We are usually in a residential zone. These are their retirement years they want it to be a quiet neighborhood, sometimes our neighbors our best customers.
- J. Hansen We need a bylaw for this to be passed at town meeting.
- M. Shane I'm concerned about a few things in your regulations but I'm sure we can work thru those things.
- J. Hansen That is the point of this discussion, the draft regulations I put forward are based on this board's comments from last summer when we first started talking about it.
- M. Shane After looking at the regulations we didn't see anything with regulations 1 and 2 but regulation 3 is an issue. It says "at least 15% of the units will be deemed affordable monthly cost cannot exceed 30% of the monthly income for those who qualify at below 80 % of the mean income of the year". I know you have an affordable housing issue, but the word "cost cannot exceed" we could make 15 % of our units the affordable housing end of it if you are taking the cost for care for food and everything else that is an issue I can't rent 15 units out at 30% of the market value I can rent it out at the housing market value but I can rent it out at the cost of the care. Somehow the wording has to make the fit.
- J. Hansen What is your monthly rate for Swan Brook?

- M. Shane Our monthly rate ranges from \$ 2,450.00 to \$3,750.00. That includes everything we are the lowest priced assisted living in this area.
- J. Hansen So we need to figure out the housing aspect of it is vs the care aspect.
- M. Shane The housing aspect of it we would be willing to do the 15% to reduce it down to the affordable housing rate but I can't do it on the care. It would put me at a disadvantage.
- J. Hansen Right out of the \$2,4000 what is the break down housing vs services, we aren't holding you to that but approximately?
- M. Shane Probably \$800 or \$900, people don't come to assisted living who don't need care they need some level of care. Regulation 3 is more for affordable housing aspect not assisted living aspect.
- J. Hansen Would be as simple as changing the language to say "the monthly housing cost"?
- M. Shane 70% that doesn't concern me to a point, it is how we apply it and monitor it because if I don't have 70% of the people from Seekonk that apply I need to fill up my vacancies. Plus you may want to put some wording in that if adult children who live in Seekonk want to put there folks who might live in Florida or elsewhere but want them back in Seekonk in assisted living that they get that preference as well. You may want to expand that language to take that into consideration. I just want to make it clear that I will not leave 70% of the units vacant if there is nobody coming in from Seekonk. Regulation 5 -Dimension set backs we had no problems with. Site plan parking and parking review I understand what they are getting at but our staffing patterns are different from nursing home patterns. Nursing homes have more staff than assisted living facilities you might want to put back up some kind of provision.
- J. Hansen It translates into a quarter to a half a spot per bed.
- M. Shane I can deal with that.
- Accessory Structures, when it says in the regulation that it will only be in the residential building I'm concerned with that because I would want to build a separate community structure and I don't want that regulation stop that.
- J. Hansen So if something were written in there about accessory uses within the residential building or a separate community center.
- M. Shane That would be great because we aren't doing any retail stores, snack bars etc. Our success is because we aren't big.
- S. Foulkes Are you looking for the same acreage you have in Swansea?
- M. Shane Not looking to expand over 84 units. Not a large lot but perhaps a bit larger than in Swansea. That's about it I would like to start looking for a lot but don't want to do anything until you look at this.
- B. Rice It will take time to get the bylaw passed.

- M. Shane I understand that. I would be willing to talk to anyone I know it is important to know the benefits community tax benefits etcí win for you a win for seniors itø win win all the way around. Thank you, have a nice night.
- Ch. Abelson What is the boardø pleasure, to actively/aggressively pursue this bring it forth as soon as possible?
- J. Hansen There is the Spring Town meeting. The only changes we talked about tonight are simple. I think that if the board is comfortable with Markø comments that it be in a residential district we donø put it as originally proposed in an overlay district. But have it as a use allowed as a special permit it a residence district.
- B. Rice For it as a bylaw put it through as a petition. Changes make it more applicable to others that might want to build.
- R. Bennett We have to careful on how we word it.
- S. Foulkes I think that whatever we doing if it says assisted living stick with that.
- J. Hansen The key is the wording part of that language needs to be cleaned up.

**John Hansen to go over the language, look up the definition of assisted living and look up what other towns do. After polling, Board agrees that no age requirement to be put into the bylaw.**

**Further discussion tentative for February 8 if not February 22.**

#### **Citizens for Citizens discussion**

- J. Hansen I asked Carol Bragg to write this letter to the board so you could read and see what she was proposing.
- M. Bourque My first question would be do you need help?
- J. Hansen My opinion on what is proposed from the interests and skill set being proposed here I think this is something based on our past experiences having anymore work done at this level with out any buy-in from the powers that be is a waste of time. I think that is who should be seeking these skill sets. If we go ahead and submit these grants and they shoot them down what is the sense?
- B. Rice I agree with that. In addition someone is going to have to do the things that are required. A training plan plus a worker could be re-assigned any time and there is a 2 year limitation. Who is going to supervise this position?
- S. Foulkes We have a lot of bylaws we are working on and Iøam just wondering if we could use her services to research these things.
- B. Rice Iøam not saying we donø want help but this is going to be a burden on somebody who is going to have to supervise and interact with her like any other employee the benefits have to outweigh that burden and I just donø know. This is just not giving a person a job and letting them alone to do it, it will involved a lot of interaction with John

and does he have the time for this. This is not a simple thing getting another person in your work environment.

M. Bourque My feeling is if you don't need the help then you don't need the help. You would have to commit to this person for at least one year.

J. Hansen I think the economy would have to pick up a lot for us not to have the time to get the things done.

L. Dunn This Citizens for Citizens position is it for Seekonk residents only?

B. Rice No and they can be reassigned at anytime.

J. Hansen There are a lot of departments that could utilize her skills.

R. Bennett I don't think we really need help at this time and as it has been expressed it would be up to the Board of Selectman if they could use her.

**R. Bennett made a motion that Planning Board send a letter to Carol Bragg stating that although the Board appreciates the offer right now the Planning Board doesn't need the help nor has the staff to over see the position at this time. Seconded by T. Clancy and so voted unanimously by T. Clancy, R. Bennett, S. Foulkes, L. Dunn, Ch. Abelson, M. Bourque, B. Rice**

**VOTE: (7-0)**

**Correspondence:**

J. Hansen I was told last Thursday that the BOS has invited the Planning Board to the February 2 meeting to talk about affordable housing plan.

**T. Clancy made a motion to discuss legal strategies related to Girard Estates in an executive session on February 8, 2010 at 6:00PM in the BOS room seconded by B. Rice and so voted unanimously by T. Clancy, R. Bennett, S. Foulkes, L. Dunn, Ch. Abelson, M. Bourque, B. Rice**

**VOTE: (7-0)**

**Adjournment**

**B. Rice made a motion to adjourn, seconded by R Bennett and so voted unanimously by T. Clancy, R. Bennett, S. Foulkes, L. Dunn, Ch. Abelson, M. Bourque, B. Rice**

**VOTE: (7-0)**

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm

Respectfully Submitted by:

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Florice Craig, Secretary