

Bethlehem Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
Bethlehem Selectmen Office
July 20, 2015

Present: Chairman Culver, Selectman Glavac, Selectman Laleme, Selectman Blanchard.

Chairman Culver opened the meeting at 6:30pm and explained there will be 3 public hearing but said he may switch the order of the public hearings because some are contingent on others so it doesn't make sense the order they are in. Handouts were offered to the public.

Chairman Culver read the hearing notice...

The Bethlehem Board of Selectmen will hold three consecutive Public Hearings on Monday, July 20 2015, at 6:30pm at the Town Offices, 2155 Main Street
PO Box 189 Bethlehem, NH 03574 Office: (603) 869-3351, ext. 10 Community Development Block Grant funds are available to municipalities through the NH Community Development Finance Authority. Up to \$500,000 annually is available for economic development projects; up to \$500,000 for public facility and housing projects; up to \$500,000 in emergency grants; and up to \$12,000 is available for each planning grant. All projects must primarily benefit low and moderate income persons. The subjects of the public hearings are as follows:

1. A proposed application for up to \$500,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds. The majority of the funds, up to \$475,000, or the benefit of those funds, will be subgranted to AHEAD, or a subsidiary, for the construction of 25 units of affordable housing, off Main Street in Bethlehem. The CDBG funds will finance acquisition and infrastructure to the site boundary costs.
2. The Town's Housing and Community Development Plan.
3. The Antidisplacement and Relocation Plan for the proposed CDBG project.

Provisions for persons with special needs can be made by contacting the Selectmen's Office, via telephone (869-3351, ext. 10) or mail, at least five days prior to the public hearings.

Chairman Culver opened the public hearing on Bethlehem's Housing and Community Development Plan and read the script from the handout:

Bethlehem has a Housing and Community Development Plan that was last adopted in 2010. Housing and Community Development Plans can be no more than 3 years old to be accepted with a CDBG application. New required CDBG policy statements are being added to the Plan last adopted in 2010:

These goals are consistent with Bethlehem's Master Plan and Ordinances.

Any federal CDBG grant funds awarded to address any of these goals shall be expended consistent with national objectives and shall, at a minimum, provide improved housing in accordance with Section 8 standards, be used for public facility projects, employment opportunities, or feasibility studies. All CDBG funded projects, shall primarily benefit low and moderate income persons or households, and shall not benefit moderate income persons to the exclusion of low income persons.

The proposed Lloyd's Hill Housing project conforms with Bethlehem's Housing and Community Development Plan's Goal of: GOAL – Assist residents with special needs, such as the elderly, the handicapped, and those of low and moderate income, by encouraging decent, safe, sanitary, and affordable housing (Short-term Goal)

Donna Lane said the Town already has a plan but it was last adopted in 2010. She said it is relevant for today's goals and only added 2 requirements that have to be in there to get the grant. Selectman Glavac asked what the changes were and she said it says it is consistent with the Master Plan and added the language that the grant be used to benefit low and moderate income (added low to this). Pat Doughty said the Master Plan is in the process of being reworked and the Planning Board should do the Master Plan process first. He said the housing plan should be part of that because Master Plan process could change housing plan. Selectman Laleme asked if we should put a hold on all development until the Master Plan is complete, she said it is being updated not a new plan. Selectman Laleme also said it is the same plan we have had for many years with the only difference being those 2 additions. Rita Farrell asked what the income range is for the low to moderate. Donna Lane said it is about the housing development plan and is not project specific and said the income depends on household size. Mrs. Farrell was told for 3 -5 person household it ranges from \$33,000 to 48,300. Olive Bealeu from AHEAD said the housing is for the working population. Selectman Laleme suggested telling the people where the project is. Mrs. Bealeu said it is opposite Longfellow Dr. and Hedgerose Drive on Main Street. She said it is 44.47 acres and two roads (Noyes & James) dead end into it.

Mrs. Farrell asked if they are subject to pay taxes and asked who pays the taxes. Ms. Bealeu said AHEAD will pay taxes and does for all of their properties. She said AHEAD owns 18 properties and paid \$285,840.00 in taxes and paid \$5267.00 in Bethlehem for taxes on the property in Bethlehem. There was discussion about whether the units will be section 8 housing and Ms. Bealeu said they will not be Section 8 or rental subsidy that goes along with this project. David Wood who used to work for AHEAD said the plan should be revised when the Master Plan is updated but right now what we have is the current Master Plan. He also said there is a state formula to determine how much in taxes they pay.

Pat Doughty asked if Bethlehem already supplies enough of this type of housing. Ms. Lane said in order to get CDBG funds they have to apply by deadline and the Planning Board will be after they know if they have funding. She said market studies will be done to determine need. Ms. Bealeu said the market study is a work in progress but said it indicates there is a need for this type of housing. She said in 2014 North Country Council did a study that indicates there is a need.

Mr. Epstein said the Master Plan survey indicates people do not want low income housing. Selectman Laleme said 14.6% of community responded to the survey. She said that is a small % of people. Ms.

Lane said the only thing altered is the required CDBG language and said this is just to make us eligible for grants. Mike Bruno said 14% is normal % for community survey. He said we should wait for the new Master Plan before doing this. There was discussion about doing an income survey and who does it. It was said the North Country Council did an income survey in 2014. Dick Robie said the Village District had to do an income survey when they did their grant and asked why they didn't have to. He was told it was different for housing and water grants and also that there is up to \$500,000 available for each category per year. There was discussion about the cost of the project, the different funding sources, and whether the funding is guaranteed. Mr. Wood said all of the funding is guaranteed before construction. Peter Roy asked why AHEAD is looking at Bethlehem. Mr. Wood said Bethlehem has 2500 residents and is the 2nd largest in Northern Grafton County. He also said Littleton already has significant amount of housing and Bethlehem has zero subsidized housing for families. He said Franconia has more subsidized housing than Bethlehem.

Ms. Bealeau said they are scheduled to go before the ZBA on August 6th and the Planning Board on August 12th. Mr. Wood said the next application deadline for the CDBG grant is Jan. 1st with the funds being available July of next year. There was discussion about how far away is the completion of the Master Plan and it was estimated to be anywhere from 3 months to 12 months. Mr. Bruno said it is the Planning Board's goal to complete it by the end of the year. Chris McGrath said the results are out and available to the public now. Selectman Laleme said ordinances will need to be rewritten if there are big changes in the Master Plan on housing and said the housing plan can be changed or updated at any time. There was discussion about the location of the property and whether DOT permits were obtained yet and Chairman Culver said this hearing is about housing plan only that applies to the whole town and not project specific. Pat Doughty asked if the Town has to guarantee the funds from a CDBG grant. Ms. Lane said only a municipality can ask for CDBG funds but it will be sub- granted out. She also said security is put on the project so it will not go back to the taxpayers if it doesn't happen. Ms. Lane said no one could ask for CDBG grant money without this housing plan being approved. Chairman Culver closed the hearing.

Chairman Culver opened the public hearing on Proposed Bethlehem Lloyd's Hill Housing CDBG Project and read the script from the handout:

Community Development Block Grant funds are available to municipalities through the NH Community Development Finance Authority. Up to \$500,000 annually is available on a competitive basis for housing and public facilities, up to \$500,000 for economic development, and up to \$350,000 for emergency activities. All projects must benefit primarily low and moderate income persons. Up to \$12,000 is available per planning study grants.

The purpose of this Community Development Block Grant funding request is a proposed application to the Community Development Finance Authority for up to \$500,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds. The majority of the funds, up to \$475,000, or the benefit of those funds, will be sub-granted to AHEAD, or a subsidiary, for the construction of 25 units of affordable housing, off Main Street in Bethlehem, Lloyd's Hill Housing. The CDBG funds will finance acquisition and infrastructure to the site boundary costs.

This project conforms with Bethlehem's Housing and Community Development Plan's Goal of: GOAL- Assist residents with special needs, such as the elderly, the handicapped, and those of low and moderate income, by encouraging decent, safe, sanitary, and affordable housing (Short-term Goal)

Ms. Bebeau said the project will have 25 units that are townhouse style. She said the rents are low enough because of the costs being down and explained the project will have a solar array. There was discussion about the acreage of the lot and how much the project will be. Mrs. Farrell asked if they were applying for general amount or project specific amount and was told project specific amount. Mr. Doughty said workforce housing may reduce property values and he said he doesn't think it is the right location and thinks it would be better at a different location. Chairman Culver closed the second hearing.

Chairman Culver opened the hearing on Anti-displacement and Relocation Plan for the proposed CDBG project and read the script from the handout:

Although this project does not involve any displacement or relocation of persons (or businesses), if the Town were to undertake a CDBG project which involved displacement or relocation they would follow this plan. The plan outlines the measures they would take to find comparable, suitable housing for person (or businesses) displaced or relocated.

Ms. Lane said any CDBG grant no matter what has to adopt this. There was discussion on what conditions and restrictions there will be to get the money. Ms. Lane said they have to have a code of ethics policy, 504 plan, and financial plan, all permits and funding sources verified and security on funding. Mr. Epstein asked if they didn't get the \$500,000 funding if they will continue with the project. Ms. Bebeau said they try to get best funding for each project but never get all they apply for and it changes often. It was said that this is the 1st step and all money will be there before the project begins. David Wood said every AHEAD project has had CDBG funds. Mrs. Farrell asked if they could do things that could help property values for surrounding properties. Mr. Wood said nobody has proven that any AHEAD property has diminished anyone's property value. Julian Czarny said there should be a study on nuisance for social services and said the factories, resorts etc. that the people work at are not in our town. He said it would be approx. 125 that would affect our police, fire, roads, and welfare. Mr. Wood said the majority move from unsafe or unaffordable place from their current town so he doesn't think there will be measurable increase in social services. Mr. Bruno said the town works hard to reduce the budget and kids going from Littleton to Bethlehem will affect the school which will affect the budget.

There was discussion about the solar energy and whether it would be the primary heating source. Ms. Bebeau said it will be the primary source but will be on the grid as back up. Peter Roy said he is against the Board approving this. Mr. Robie said the development behind the Catholic Church has water problems from tree clearing and thinks this project will add to the problems. Chairman Culver closed the public hearing.

Selectman Laleme moved to adopt the Housing and Community Development plan. Selectman Glavac seconded. Selectman Glavac said it is no harm in applying for the grant but that it is bad timing. He said he would like to see study first and said this feels rushed. Selectman Blanchard agreed that it is bad

timing. Chairman Culver said he has an issue with the wording about Master Plan. Motion failed 1-3 (Selectman Laleme yes).

Selectman Glavac moved to adopt the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan. Selectman Laleme seconded. Carried 4-0.

Selectman Glavac moved to approve Lloyd's Hill Housing CDBG Project. Selectman Laleme seconded but said it is irrelevant now and would be a waste of their time. Motion failed (Selectman Glavac yes).

At 8:30 pm Chairman Culver moved to go into non-public session per 91-A:3 II (a) to discuss personnel. Selectman Laleme seconded. Chairman Culver did roll call with all members agreeing to go into non-public session.

The Board discussed personnel.

At 9:20 Chairman Culver moved to come out of non-public session. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 4-0.

At 9:20 Chairman Culver moved to adjourn. Selectman Glavac seconded. Carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,
April Hibberd
Administrative Assistant