



TOWN OF LEDYARD
CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL

Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez

MINUTES
PUBLIC HEARING
LEDYARD TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS - ANNEX BUILDING
HYBRID FORMAT

DRAFT

PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

6:30 PM, DECEMBER 13, 2023

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Rodriguez called to order the Public Hearing at 6:30 p.m. regarding a State of Connecticut 2020 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) Housing Urban Development/State (HUD) for improvements at the Kings Corner Manor Senior Housing, Gales Ferry.
- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- III. PROCEDURE OF THE PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Rodriguez welcomed all to the Hybrid Meeting. She stated for the members of the Town Council and the Public who were participating via video conference that the remote meeting information was available on the Agenda that was posted on the Town's Website – Granicus-Legistar Meeting Portal.

- IV. CALL OF THE PUBLIC HEARING

The following call of the Public Hearing was read by Town Council Administrative Assistant Roxanne M. Maher:

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Town of Ledyard will conduct Hybrid Format (In-Person and Video Conference) Public Hearing by the Town Council on **Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.** to discuss the Fiscal Year 2020 Community Development Block Grant program and to solicit citizen input.

The purpose of the public hearing is to provide information and obtain citizen's views on the progress of the Grant under the Public Housing Modernization category for the Kings Corner Manor Improvements which was funded under the Connecticut Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program which is a federally funded program designed to assist governments with activities directed toward neighborhood and housing revitalization, economic development, and improved community facilities and services.

Also, the public hearing will be to give citizens an opportunity to make their comments known on the program and for approval of the Program Income Reuse Plan.

If you are unable to attend the public hearing, you may direct written comments to Fred Allyn, III at the Town of Ledyard, Office of the Mayor, 741 Colonel Ledyard Hwy, Ledyard, CT or you may telephone (860) 623-8122. In addition, information may be obtained at the above address between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:45p.m. Monday through Thursday.

The Town of Ledyard promotes fair housing and makes all programs available to low- and moderate-income households regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, marital status, age, lawful source of income, familial status, learning disability or physical/mental disability, or sexual orientation.

“All are encouraged to attend. The hearing is accessible to the handicapped. Any disabled persons requiring special assistance or non-English speaking persons should contact Kristen Chapman, ADA Coordinator at 860-464-3222 at least five days prior to the hearing.”

Please join the Public Hearing in-person or remotely as follows:

In-person attendance will be at the
Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building
741 Colonel Ledyard Highway, Ledyard, Connecticut

Join the video conference meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone at:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85848246250?pwd=OWs1EE17tC0uriaWKbo4BbghOLj1kR.1>
or by audio only dial: +1 646 558 8656 Meeting ID: 858 4824 6250 Passcode: 585406

At this hearing interested persons may appear and be heard and written communications will be accepted.

If you have any questions please contact Land Use Director Juliet Hodge at (860) 464-3215, as soon as possible.

Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin J. Dombrowski
Town Council Chairman

Please Publish on the following two Dates:

1st publication; Monday, November 20, 2023

2nd publication; Monday, December 4, 2023

IV. PRESENTATIONS

Mr. Kent Lewis, Jr., Housing Development Team, LLC., stated his firm was hired to assist with the administration of the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). He provided some background stating on March 11, 2020 the Town Council held a Public Hearing to receive comments and recommendations regarding the adoption of a Certified Resolution to apply for the Small Cities Grant Program for the Kings Corner Manor, Senior Housing.

Mr. Lewis stated the original Grant Application was in the amount of \$1.5 million. However, he stated because the State had some additional funding that they approved the Small Cities Program Grant in the amount of \$1,608,827, which provided a budget that allowed them to accomplish all the improvement work. He stated that BRB Builders was selected through a Procurement Process; and that the Contractor began the improvement work in March, 2023.

Mr. Kent explained that the goal of the 2020 State Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Application was to improve the Kings Corner Manor, which was constructed in the 1980's. He stated because the facility was an older development, the heat was electric baseboard, the original windows and doors were not energy efficient, and the tubs were a safety hazard for older and disabled people.

Mr. Lewis stated the scope of the improvement work was to address health and safety issues, energy efficiencies, and improve American Disability Act (ADA) areas where they could throughout the process. He stated the improvements included the replacement of windows, outside doors, and installation of storm doors with energy star rated products and some site work that addressed sidewalks, site lighting, new gutters, and other improvements that were within the budget. It also included the installation of new heat pump systems for improved and efficient heating and air conditioning in each unit, the tubs were removed and replaced with roll-in showers and grab bars, the toilets, sinks and flooring materials were replaced removing architectural barriers; with the objective to make the housing units easier for the residents to live in as well as improve the energy consumption and efficiencies to help with tenants energy costs. However, he stated they left the electric baseboard heaters in-place should the mini-splits not keep up, explaining that the baseboard heaters could be used to keep the tenants warm. He stated all the units received new kitchens (sinks and new appliances) and new bathrooms.

Mr. Lewis stated this was their second Public Hearing regarding the Kings Corner Senior Housing Facility, which was required as part of this CDBG Grant Program. He stated the Construction Phase of the renovation/improvement project work at the Kings Corner Manor, Senior Housing was nearly 95% complete. He stated they were dealing with Punch List Items, final approvals, and inspections. He stated the tenants have gone through the process of losing their kitchens for about 1-2 weeks, and that everyone was now back in their apartments and that everything was functioning well. However, he stated they still had some work to do on the Fire Monitoring System, stating that the original wiring system would not work with the new monitoring system. He explained with the old monitoring system that if someone called for aide they did not know which

unit it was. However, he stated with the new system they would know which unit was calling for help, noting that it was a much safer system for the tenants.

Mr. Lewis stated the largest change order was the electric, explaining that they had to run conduit for the underground wires from the Community Building to every building in the housing complex. He stated because they ran into a lot of ledge this part of the project took some additional time. He also explained that once the Contractor began to remove things they found that more work was required in some areas, which also took some additional time. He stated that they hoped the Contractor would be done by the end of the December, 2023.

Mr. Lewis stated this CDBG Grant would not have any program income because the Grant was designated for construction. He stated for other CDBG Grants such as the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program they do have program income, explaining that because the town would have some money sitting in the bank waiting to be loaned out that the town could receive some interest income which would be reprogrammed back to Rehabilitation Loan Program to be loaned out for other homes.

Chairman Rodriguez thanked Mr. Lewis for his presentation.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS (please limit to three minutes)

Ms. Colleen Lauer, 19 Nutmeg Drive, Ledyard, Executive Director of the Kings Corner Manor Senior Citizens Housing Facility, stated Kings Corner Manor had thirty affordable housing units for the elderly and disabled. She stated when she was hired in 2019 the property had not had any major upgrades done to the interior since the Housing Facility opened in the early 1980's. She stated the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) was awarded in December 2020, noting that it was during the Covid Pandemic, which impacted the Project. Therefore, she stated the improvement work did not actually begin until early 2023. She stated the first new heat pump was installed in March, 2023, and the entire Project was expected to take twelve months. She stated they had two units on-site along with one additional American Disability Act (ADA) accessible unit at a Groton Housing Facility for tenants to stay at while the renovation/improvement work was being done to their apartment unit. She stated the other renovation/improvement work began in July, 2023 and that the last ADA Unit was completed in December 2023. She stated the Project did not take the full-year as anticipated, and that it had been uncomfortable and difficult at times. However, she stated that receiving the CDBG Grant was a blessing, noting that the funding allowed the Housing Authority to upgrade all thirty apartment units with new bathrooms, kitchens, exterior doors and storm doors, windows, and heat pumps. She stated the Grant Funding also allowed for the new sidewalks, and for the siding, fire alarm and call for aide to be updated. She thanked the Town Council and the Town for applying for the CDBG Grant to facilitate the renovation and upgrades for the tenants living at the Kings Corner Manor Senior Citizens Housing Facility, noting that the improvements were greatly needed.

Mr. Charles Duzy, 4 Harvard Terrace, Gales Ferry, Housing Authority Chairman, stated that he has served on the Housing Authority since 2018 and that he has seen several changes at the Kings Corner Manor Senior Citizens Housing Facility over the years. He stated the thirty apartment units had not been updated since they were built in the early 1980's due to the lack of funding, noting that only necessary fixes were addressed. He stated in 2019 the newly hired Executive Director Colleen Lauer began looking for options to improve the property. He stated the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) was the perfect option for the Housing Authority, noting that the Grant would provide the money for much of the renovation/improvement work. He stated the Housing Authority would not need to take out loans to complete the work and by using the Grant funding they would not have to increase the tenant's rent. He stated after presenting options to the Town Council the Town applied for the CDBG Grant in 2020. He thanked the Town Council noting that the grant funding allowed the Housing Authority to make significant improvements at the Kings Corner Manor Senior Citizens Housing Facility. He concluded by thanking Executive Director Colleen Lauer for the enormous amount of time and effort that she applied to the successful completion of this Project, noting that it would not be where it was without Ms. Lauer's efforts.

Ms. Paula Crocker, 1500 Route 12, Gales Ferry, Housing Authority Member, stated prior to her Mother passing away eleven years ago, that she lived at the Kings Corner Manor Senior Citizens Housing Facility for seventeen years. She stated the apartment units needed to be upgraded when her Mother lived there, but it took another ten years to get the money to do the renovation/improvement work. She stated that her Mother's unit had the kitchen redone, but that it was only because someone had driven their car into her apartment. She stated these renovations were much needed and have given the tenants a practically new place to live, noting that they look wonderful both inside and outside. She thanked Executive Director Colleen Lauer, and the Town Council. She stated if the renovation work did not happen that she did not think that the Kings Corner Manor Senior Citizens Housing Facility would still be there for our senior citizens ten years from now.

Mr. Tony Saccone, 29 Richard Road, Gales Ferry, Town Councilor, stated that he worked at the Kings Corner Manor Senior Citizens Housing Facility for nine years as the Maintenance Mechanic, and he noted that the renovation/improvements to the apartment units were much-needed. He stated as the Maintenance Mechanic that he had to take the air conditioning units out of the thirty-units every Autumn and put them back in the walls every Spring. He also stated that he had to open the windows because they were so damaged that the elderly tenants could not open their windows themselves. He stated because the Facility was not ADA compliant that over the nine years he had to somehow make it compliant. He stated with the renovation/improvement work that Unit #7 was now totally ADA Compliant and the tenant could get in and out of their apartment, noting that the work done has been a total transformation. He rhetorically questioned where else could tenants get new kitchens and new bathrooms for free. He stated as the Gales Ferry Fire Chief that when they responded to an emergency call at the Kings Corner Manor the alarm did not tell them who, what, or where the help was needed, explaining that the First Responders would have to go through five buildings-thirty apartments to find out who needed help. He stated with the new Fire Alarm System the Emergency First Responders would now know the exact location the call for aid was coming from. He stated Executive Director Colleen Lauer and the Housing Authority had done an amazing job; and he thanked them for their efforts.

Mr. Gary Paul, 48 Avery Hill Road Extension, Ledyard, Town Councilor, thanked Executive Director Colleen Lauer for the amazing job she has done for Kings Corner Manor Senior Citizens Housing Facility and for overseeing the Renovation/Improvement Project. He also thanked the Housing Authority for getting the Project done. He stated it was a blessing to the tenants to receive the CDBG Grant.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Rodriguez stated hearing no further public comment, that the Public Hearing was adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Transcribed by Roxanne M. Maher
Administrative Assistant to the Town Council

I, S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman of the Ledyard Town Council,
hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct
copy of the minutes of the Public Hearing held on December 13, 2023.

Attest: _____
S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman