



Legislation Text

File #: 23-2072, Version: 1

AGENDA REQUEST GENERAL DISCUSSION ITEM

Subject:

Discussion to help foster a dialogue to improve the relationship at the Kings Corner Senior Citizens Housing Facility.

Background:

See attached Documents:

- (1) Office of Legislative Research (OLR) Housing Authorities
- (2) CGS 8-40 - 8-41 Housing Authorities
- (3) LHA Lease
- (4) Rules & Regulations (Lease Addendums)
- (5) LHA Flyer regarding Smoking Policy
- (6) Ordinance #100-010 (rev 1) “ *Ordinance Establishing A Housing Authority And Payment In Lieu Of Taxes Agreement For The Town Of Ledyard*”

Town Council Meeting 8/23/2023- Residents Comments:

Mrs. Eleanor Murray, 16 Chapman Lane, Gales Ferry, stated she was present to talk about the Kings Corner Manor Senior Citizens Housing Facility. She stated if everything was great at the Senior Housing Facility State Senator Cathy Osten would not have visited the Facility four times in the past three months. She stated if they could have solved the problems and found any solutions for the issues Senator Osten would not have had to visit the property. She stated the issues were not really about the Smoking Policy, she stated the issues at the Senior Citizens Housing Facility were about a number of things which included: Tenants not being allowed to have six-foot sheds, now they can have three-foot sheds; the ramp where a woman with a wheelchair lived was being taken out; there were cameras out of every window of the Director’s Building and in the Community Room where the Director could spy on people, and Tenants now have to sign up to use the washer and dryer to do their laundry. She stated that she was only mentioning a few little things that have changed, noting that there were dozens of them. She noted the changes started the first year, and then the changes gained momentum, noting that the Tenants originally had a four-page lease which has become a twenty-page lease noting that it was picayune. She stated the Director of Kings Corner Manor came from H&R Block and she was now directing an Apartment Complex. Mrs. Murry suggested that the Director needed professional training in how to manage an apartment complex and how to treat human beings who were in her care. She stated it was an unhappy place and it was justifiable so. She stated that she was shocked, and that she did not blame the Kings Corner Manor Tenants for being unhappy, noting that she believed they were being treated terribly, noting that they had 10-20-years to live at the end of their lives. She stated the Tenants have been told if they did not like it, to move, and she rhetorically questioned where they could move to. She concluded by stating that she hoped

they could find a solution to help the Tenants at the Kings Corner Senior Housing Facility and that the Director could find some help to be a better manager. She stated that she would like to be part of the solution, noting that the Tenants cannot keep going to Senator Osten or calling the Connecticut Department of Housing; or the Department of Aging. Thank you,

Mr. Ed Murray, 16 Chapman Lane, Gales Ferry, noted that he and his wife moved to Ledyard about one-year ago, noting that they were hopeful and excited about moving to Ledyard. He stated during the past year his experience has found that Ledyard was more concerned about their Policies and Procedures than they were about the people. He stated the people always come second to whatever they were deciding to do. He stated although he has not spoken to the Town Council before, that he wanted to tell them that they have an amazing responsibility for 16,000 people who lived in town. He stated the Town Council had influence over other town organizations and they had other people who were in positions of authority and responsibility, who could put our people first. He stated the community he came from was about 20,000 people, however, he stated their organizations always put the people first. He noted that he has noticed things such as the Board of Education making a big issue about someone wanting to join the Robotics Team, but at the same time, they were allowing students from other schools to play on their sports teams, noting that making this a big issue did not make sense to him. He continued by addressing the Smoking Policy at the Kings Corner Manor Senior Citizens Housing Facility, noting that the Tenants were having to make their way down a 275- foot driveway to smoke on a corner, so they would not be on the Senior Housing Facility's property; and that someone called the Police and said the Tenants were panhandling. He stated that this was not something they wanted people to say about a citizen the town had responsible for. He stated the Town needed to take care of 16,000 residents first, noting that they have to understand the difference between what was fair and what was not. He stated, "*Society was remembered by how they take care of the least of us*". He stated he was not referring to those who had a good living and an exceptional family, and have had the opportunity to live the life they planned. He stated he was talking about the people who don't have those things; stating that they now have an opportunity to take care of those people, noting that it does not cost the community anything. He stated when he looked at issues in the community that the first thing he looked at was what does it do for the people, how does what they were trying to do it affect the people. He stated it makes sense to think of the people first, before they do anything else.

Ms. Nina Diaz, 1546 Route 12, Gales Ferry, attending remotely, addressed the Kings Corner Manor Senior Citizens Housing Facility Smoking Policy. She questioned possible solutions for the Tenants, noting that they have been pushed off the Kings Corner Manor Senior Citizens Housing Facility property and onto the road. She stated in talking with one of the Tenants yesterday, he explained that the town owned from the center line of the road to 25-feet into the shoulder/property line, noting that the Tenants were being forced to smoke on town property. She stated with the liability issues that she hoped that Town Officials could step-in to help create a solution that was safe for our elders. She stated although everyone could say that smoking was not good for your health, etc., and they should not be smoking, that none of us were in the Tenants position. She commented that these people have earned the right to do what they want to do in life. She stated instead of condemning them for having a bad habit that it was our responsibility to come up with a safe solution for our seniors. She noted with the snow, freezing rain, and other winter conditions that there was going to be some dangerous incidents if the Tenants have to continue to walk down the driveway and stand on the road/town property to smoke. She asked Town Officials to work with the community to find some suggestions together.

Ms. Sherry Fernandez, 60 Kings Corner, Gales Ferry, noted that she was a Tenant at the Kings Corner Senior Citizens Housing Facility. She stated that she agreed with Mr. and Mrs. Murry's comments this evening. She stated although she could also talk about how unsafe it was for seniors to walk down to the road to smoke that she was going to talk about one fact that she knew to be true, which was that the cigarette smokers were being discriminated against. She stated the cigarette smokers were being discriminated because there were other

Tenants who were allowed to have fire pits, tiki torches, and gas grills. She noted she had paperwork that stated the use of all these things were also health risks, noting that there were chemicals in gas grills, and that the tiki torch fuel was highly toxic, much more toxic than cigarette smoke, but that these Tenants were being allowed to keep these items. She stated she brought these issues up about one-year ago at one of the Housing Authority Board Meetings. She stated the Board's solution at that time was to Grandfather-in the Tenants with tiki torches and fire pits. She stated when she brought these issues up again at the Housing Authority's Board Meeting this month, she saw the Housing Authority's Chairman Charley Duzy roll his eyes, while she spoke. She stated Mr. Duzy then replied that the Smoking Policy stands as is; and did not mention any of the things she brought to the meeting. She concluded by stating that the Smoking Policy was discrimination and that if the Housing Authority was going to ban smoking at the Kings Corner Manor Senior Citizens Housing Facility that they would have to also ban it all; and that she planned to continue to pursue the matter.

Chairman Dombrowski stated although the town was limited on what they could do because the Kings Corner Manor Senior Housing Facility falls under the State Housing Authority, that he would ask the Community Relations Committee to help foster some dialogue to see if they could remediate some of the issues and concerns.

Additional Information:

Housing Authority Meeting 9/5/2023: Reconsidered Lease Addendum re: Smoking Policy and voted to uphold March 6, 2023 Decision.

Housing Authority Meeting 3/6/2023: Adopted Lease Addendum re: Smoking Policy to become Effective August 1, 2023