

Goshen Housing Trust, Inc.
Box 511
Goshen, CT 06756

January 19, 2019

Mr. Richard Reis
President
Woodridge Lake Property Owners' Association, Inc.
260 E. Hyerdale Drive
Goshen, CT 06756

Dear Richard:

First let me thank you for the opportunity to address some of the legitimate concerns that have been expressed by your members about a possible Goshen Housing Trust project. I would also like to address the significant amount of incorrect information that was circulated in advance of the Town's meeting on the amendment of Title 67 this past Monday.

The Goshen Housing Trust is interested in the mentioned 8-acre property on Beach Street for a possible housing project. As you are aware, that property is NOT within the Woodridge Lake Property Owners' Association area and, therefore, whoever develops this property will not have any claim to membership or use of the WLPOA's many recreational facilities (one concern that some expressed).

That property is within the Woodridge Lake Sewer District and anyone who develops that property has the right to connect to the District sewer lines. This fact makes the property especially attractive for development – by the Goshen Housing Trust, or anyone.

The Goshen Housing Trust, Inc. is a 501c3 nonprofit corporation started in 2011 whose volunteer directors are either residents of Goshen or work in Goshen. Our bylaws prohibit compensation for our directors. We are neighbors who care very much about our Town.

Two of our founding directors were Woodridge Lake homeowners, and, in fact, until this past November we have always had a Woodridge Lake homeowner on our Board. We are actively growing our Board and hope to add another Woodridge Lake homeowner soon.

Goshen Housing Trust, Inc. will be the "developer" of the housing. Following a model used by housing groups in our neighboring towns such as the Litchfield Housing Trust, the Goshen Housing Trust will exercise control over the units in perpetuity. We will ensure that units are maintained and that they continue to serve their role in diversifying our Town's housing stock for many years to come. We will continue to ensure that the housing created remains a positive asset to our community.

The Goshen Housing Trust currently has an option to purchase the Beach Street property and we are in the early stages of confirming that the property is viable for a project of the sort we envision. If we move forward with this site, the process will take 2-3 years to complete including approvals, funding, and construction. There is a great deal of work to be done and we are just starting.

One of the concerns expressed was that we have not been transparent about our plans. As we don't currently have a lot concrete to say about the project, we have not yet scheduled meetings to inform the community, although we fully intend to. However, we have hardly been stealthy. We have contributed several articles about housing and our group to *Goshen Town Topics* over the past few years. We have participated in the Northwest Hills Council of Governments Housing Council for several years now and their minutes are posted. We have participated in Connecticut Community Foundation's GiveLocal for the past 2 years and the people of Goshen have been very generous to us. We also have maintained a website (www.GoshenHousingTrust.org) and have met with several Goshen community organizations over the past year to present our goals and general plans. We will continue to do all of this and will also announce meetings to present our plans for the site when sufficiently developed for a meaningful discussion.

What we can say is that our goal is to create housing units for a mix of two groups: (i) the young – young individuals just starting out (e.g., our kids), young couples, and young families, and (ii) seniors who need an option to their family home that is now too large and difficult to manage (or our parents who want to live closer to us in Goshen). The existing housing stock in Goshen offers little that is appropriate for these groups. The prices or rents for the units will be set for a range of income limits in order to provide the most value and opportunity for Goshen. The result, we think, will be a mix of ages and incomes that many studies indicate lead to stronger communities.

We want the units we create to be in keeping with our beautiful New England town and its rural nature. Our projects will not be “high-rise” or “ugly square boxes”. We also will look to preserve open space around our projects as part of their natural landscaping.

Another concern was that this project might overload the sewer system. It is our understanding that the Sewer District was aware of the right of whoever develops this property to connect and, so, included the estimated load in the development of your plans. Our units will be subject to and pay their share of Woodridge Lake Sewer District taxes. The units will also pay taxes to the Town of Goshen.

One comment made was that “There are builders on their Board who will undoubtedly benefit from the project”. You can imagine that a very experienced builder who has done projects of the scale we are attempting is quite valuable to us as a member of our Board. However, neither that individual nor his company could participate financially in any project we do. The IRS strictly prohibits any individual involved in the organization from benefiting and requires annual certification of this. As a 501c3 under Federal IRS regulations, our status as a charitable organization is central to our maintaining our tax-exemption, which in turn is critical to our access to funds.

I hope that this information is useful and helps assure your members that if we proceed with a project, the Goshen Housing Trust will be good neighbors.

Sincerely,

Chris Sanders

President, on behalf of the Board of Directors