

MIDDLETOWN LEADS

WHAT IS MIDDLETOWN LEADS?

Middletown Leads is a weekly newsletter intended to connect the Middletown community by providing information about the civic undertakings of the Town.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR SENIORS

After lengthy discussion, the Town of Middletown has issued a Request for Proposals relative to a Senior Affordable Housing Feasibility Study to identify needs, funding options, possible locations, and partners. Additionally, a market analysis and recommendations will provide a basis for the Town to make informed decisions.

Proposals must address the following tasks:

Task 1. Identify need - Using best available practices, determine the need for affordable senior citizen housing in Middletown. This includes providing estimates of the number, types and locations of units, and the types of services (on-site or adjacent) needed to serve the needs of current and future Middletown senior residents.

Task 2. Funding options – Identify and describe all available funding mechanisms available to the Town and/or private partner. Include funding eligibility requirements, and process and timeframes for securing each type of funding.

Task 3. Market analysis - A market analysis that will provide the Town with an understanding of the potential for success for non-profit and/or for-profit development of senior housing.

Task 4. Identify potential locations – Based on the above identified needs, identify preferred location(s) in town for the development of affordable housing. In consultation with the Town, evaluate the suitability of particular town-owned and/or private properties.

Task 5. Identify potential partners – Identify organizations active in the area who develop, own and operate Senior Affordable Housing that the Town sees as a model for satisfying its housing needs. Identify number of housing units, number of developments, years in operation, local community involvement and history of partnering with other agencies.

Task 6. Implementation recommendations – Provide recommendations on the actions the town should take, including organizational structure, funding, partnerships, etc. to facilitate development of senior affordable housing.

The submittal deadline is 10:00 a.m. on Friday, January 25, 2019. It is likely that a recommendation for a consultant will be forwarded to the Town Council at the February 4, 2019 meeting.

The contract term is to be no more than four months, which means that the result of the study should reach the Town Council sometime in June.

LOCATIONS

A number of different buildings have been suggested in recent years as possible locations for senior housing. A favorite seems to be the old Peckham School, which is conveniently adjacent to the Senior Center on Green End Avenue although concerns have been expressed about its condition as well as its distance from the common areas of the town.

Another location that has been mentioned is Oliphant School, which currently houses the Middletown Public Schools Administration. It offers close proximity to a shopping center that includes a grocery store.

And then, who knows what possible other locations might become available when a serious effort is underway?

AFFORDABLE HOUSING – OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The State of Rhode Island requires that each community contain 10% affordable housing. Middletown currently has a little over 6%.

It should be noted, however, that *affordable* housing is not by definition *senior* housing. Affordable housing is intended to serve a number of different populations including starter homes for families with children as well as young professionals who can be recruited to work in the companies that provide the economic foundation for the town.

Middletown's population is aging, so the concern for the senior citizens is natural. However, the Town must address the needs of other populations as well.

Connect Greater Newport, a division of the Newport County Chamber of Commerce, is an organization that is very concerned about the absence of affordable housing on Aquidneck Island because of the potential impact on commercial development. A company considering re-locating on Aquidneck Island will consider not only the economic potential but also its ability to re-locate its professional staff.

Affordable housing is a priority. *If you build it, they will come.* Our local economy depends on it.

FOOTNOTE

Weekly essays about Middletown community and municipal affairs will appear on the Middletown Public Library website. Questions and suggested topics are welcome.

Editorial essays may appear in the following blog: MiddletownLeads@blogspot.com.