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CORNWALL • DECEMBER 24, 2022

Cornwall bridge closed

Sharon Community Center eyed as affordable housing

December 21, 2022

By LEILA HAWKEN

SHARON — Acting on the critical need for affordable housing outlined in the Affordable Housing Plan approved by residents in 2022, representatives of the Sharon Housing Trust outlined preliminary ideas for renovation of the under-used Community Center building at the regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen on Tuesday, Dec. 13.

Representing the Housing Trust were Pat and Bob Whelan, who described a local effort to envision creating four apartments within the Community Center building on Main Street. Bob Whelan serves as president and treasurer of the housing organization, and Pat Whelan is the treasurer.

They also announced a community-wide information meeting to explore the plan to be held on Sunday, Jan. 15 at the Bok Gallery located at The Sharon Playhouse. The community meeting will encourage public conversation on furthering the goal of providing more housing availability for local workers and seniors seeking to downsize. The meeting will begin at 2 p.m.

To help with planning for refreshments, the Housing Trust asks that residents planning to attend should RSVP by emailing shtct2005@gmail.com or calling 860-364-0452.

Selectman Casey Flanagan commented that if local taxpayers' resources are to be used for the Community Center project, there should be assurances that the apartments would be occupied by local workers or local seniors.

First Selectman Brent Colley agreed that the central location at 99 Main Street is well-situated for affordable housing units. He added that the first step should be to check with the building department to learn what the regulations require.

"It's a great start," Colley said, but noted that the town must be involved in the process. "It will be a town decision," he added.

Speaking of the Community Center building, Bob Whalen indicated that the structure contains 3,600 square feet that could be divided into four 2-bedroom apartments of modest size.

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Renovation costs are estimated at \$300,000, Bob Whelan said, indicating that the town would retain ownership of the building and lease it to the Housing Trust, which would provide building management.

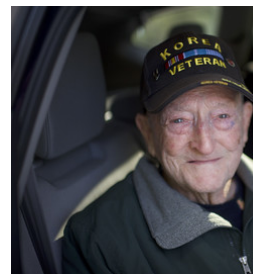
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