

TO: RTM and Board of Finance
FROM: Barbara H. Butler, Director
DATE: October 2, 2012
RE: Updated Senior Housing Request Data

With the recommendation to the First Selectman by the Baron's South Committee of its preferred developer for a Senior Residential Community on the Baron's South property there has been renewed public discussion of the need for affordable housing that supports seniors aging in place, i.e. independent living with services available as people need them over time. I thought it might be helpful to all involved to update the statistics presented to the Planning & Zoning Commission during its review of the 8-24 request and the Text Amendment #625 application in 2010-11.

The Municipal Agent for Seniors report filed by this Department annually with the state shows unduplicated requests for housing information. The unduplicated number of Westport (senior) inquiries for the past fiscal year totals 83. This number does not include the 142 requests for housing by seniors at the Westport Center for Senior Activities.

Municipal Agenda report: 83 seniors

Westport CSA: 142 seniors

(Westport Human Services non-senior housing requests: 119 adults)

211 Infoline reports that in the last 8 months 22 of the total 82 requests received from Westport residents for help in finding housing were from seniors.

The Westport Housing Authority waiting lists are closed. Typically wait lists indicate the number of units that the Owner thinks would be filled in a year. The total number of current applications is: 237 people on the Moderate Rental Waitlist (Hales Court and Sasco Creek), 30 on the Hidden Brook waitlist, and 15 on the Canal Park waitlist. With the exception of Canal Park these are all inclusive lists however, with all applicants being represented, not just seniors. It is important to recognize that the Moderate Rental waiting list was opened for approximately 4 weeks and has generated this type of interest. If the WHA had kept the waiting list opened for a longer duration, the number of applicants would have been significantly more.

In summary, the total request for assistance finding alternative affordable housing for 2011-12 looks like this:

Municipal Agent for Seniors report	83
Westport Center for Senior Activities	142
Westport Human Services adult requests	119
211 Info line	82
Westport Housing Authority	282
Total request for Westport housing	708

And of that number 273 requests (39%) were from seniors:

Municipal Agent for Seniors	83
Westport CSA	142
211 Infoline	22
WHA/Canal Park	15
WHA/Hidden Brook	11
Total senior requests	273

If we estimate conservatively based on the experience of the Westport Housing Authority that approximately 25 of the 237 households on the Moderate Income Rental wait list are seniors, that would bring to about 300 the number of Westport seniors seeking assistance in finding affordable age appropriate housing in 2011-12.

As I have said many times in public discussion, except for the last few years when the economy and un/underemployment have become the major presenting problem for younger people, housing has always been the number one reason people call our department seeking assistance. It is particularly poignant when the caller is an older resident who has lived here for much of their adult life and participated in community activities and now no longer able to maintain their home cannot find a suitable affordable place to live. And this includes people of moderate income who may find a condo they can afford but it is not designed to allow them to grow old there if health and mobility issues arise as they often do. Thus the mixed income approach to well designed senior housing addresses both of these realities.

I hope this is helpful background for your consideration of the Baron South Committee's recommendation, but please feel free to call me if you need additional information. And many thanks for your thoughtful consideration of this initiative.