

From the Town Manager's Desk

Perry A. Ellsworth
South Berwick, Maine

To the residents of South Berwick:

Re: **Senior Housing Development**

The Town Council will hold an informational meeting on June 26, 2012 at 6:45 p.m. to discuss the potential sale of Town owned land on Young Street to AVESTA Housing of Portland for construction of a 28 unit **Senior Housing Development**. The parcel is adjacent to the South Berwick Library on Young Street and abuts MSAD 35 property. A question and answer period will follow a joint presentation offered by AVESTA Housing and the Town Manager.

BACKGROUND

With the purchase of the Young Street Property in 2008 the Council realized there was potential to develop a portion of that property without interfering with the construction of a new library. In 2010 the Building Committee was charged to investigate development options for the property. The consensus for the portion of property that would not be required for the new library was to construct elderly housing.

AVESTA Housing of Portland was chosen as the group that should continue exploring options for elderly housing. AVESTA staff made a conceptual presentation to the Building Committee in January of 2011 and an informational meeting followed in April of 2011. There appeared to be substantial interest and a decision was made to move ahead with the conceptual plans.

A decision was made to concentrate on the library reconstruction project shortly after the April 2011 meeting and the housing development was put on hold. Construction was completed in the addition to the original church in January 2012 and is now being utilized as our library while the remainder of the building is renovated. We are forecasting the entire transformation to be completed this fall.

For the last six months we have been aggressively working with AVESTA to move forward with the elderly housing development. The Town Council worked with the Planning Board to allow for Congregate Housing in the B1 Zone. This change removed the restriction of no more than six units per building.

In order for AVESTA to obtaining funding for the development they must, at a minimum, have a Purchase and Sale Agreement for the property. As part of the agreement, the Town will refurbish the entrance area and parking lot, add walking paths that connect to the proposed site plan, and add lighting to the area.

THE PROGRAM

The Town Council views this development as a partnership with AVESTA. Bidding all the work together to one general contractor will offer substantial savings to the Town.

There is potential that AVESTA could start construction in the spring of 2013 if they are able to secure funding. The apartments may be available for occupancy in the spring of 2014.

After the informational meeting the Town Council will schedule a Special Town Meeting. Passage of an article to allow the Town Council to enter into a Purchase and Sale Agreement will allow AVESTA the ability to move forward to request Planning Board approval and apply for funding.

DISCUSSION ITEMS INCLUDE:

- Sale of .62 acres to AVESTA adjacent to the MSAD 35 school property for \$286,000
- A building with 28 one and two bedroom apartments restricted to residents 55 or older
- Leasing of 31 dedicated parking spots adjacent to the building at \$200 each annually
- 2 year timeframe for closure of the Purchase and Sale Agreement
- Traffic, pedestrian, and utility easements
- An agreed formula for property taxation at completion of development (approx. \$20,000 annually)
- Joint Construction responsibility agreement

I encourage all residents to attend this informational meeting. Many are anxious to sign up for the housing, but those that have questions or issues with the proposed use of the property should also be heard. If you have questions before or after the meeting please do not hesitate to call me at 384-3300 X115 or visit me at my office. Transparency and understanding based on the facts will be a requirement up front and through the process until completion.

Respectfully,

Perry Ellsworth
South Berwick Town Manager