

### **What is Goshen Housing Trust, Inc.?**

Goshen Housing Trust (GHT) is a private non-profit organization incorporated in the State of Connecticut in 2011. We are a public charity under Section 501c3 of the IRS code.

GHT is not affiliated with the Town of Goshen. GHT has not received any local tax dollars or grants from the Town of Goshen. All its funding to date has been from private donations and grants from various banks and foundations. Recently, GHT received a Pre-Development loan from the State of Connecticut.

### **What is its mission?**

GHT was organized to provide housing opportunities to individuals and/or families of modest means. Our goal is to help:

- those individuals that the Town needs to work in or serve our community to be able to live here,
- those who grow up here to be able to afford to stay here, and
- those whose homes exceed their ability to age in place to avoid moving out of town to find more appropriate housing.

To achieve this mission, we will foster the creation of permanently affordable housing of the size, type and price range that is missing from our Town and needed by the young, families and seniors.

### **Who Runs the Goshen Housing trust?**

Our Board of Directors, all of whom are residents of Goshen, work in Goshen, or have some other connection to our Town, are responsible for the oversight of the GHT. The day-to-day operations of the GHT are overseen by our officers who are elected by the Board. A list of our Directors and Officers is on our website ([www.GoshenHousingTrust.org](http://www.GoshenHousingTrust.org)).

### **Are the Directors and Officers Making Money on this?**

No. Every Director signs a Conflict of Interest Policy that says they will adhere to IRS regulations for 501c3 corporations that prohibit directors from benefiting directly or indirectly from the work of the corporation, and require each director to inform the Board immediately of any potential conflict of interest that exists or arises. The GHT would risk losing its ability to access sources of funding if we violate this.

### **What is “Affordable Housing”?**

“Affordable Housing” is defined as any housing, whether rental or home ownership, for which the total housing cost (rent or mortgage payments, taxes and insurance, plus basic utilities) is less than 30% of the income of the household.

Obviously, the lower the income level of a household, the less they can afford to pay for housing costs and have it still considered “affordable”. As the price of available housing in an area rises, individuals and families with modest incomes that are typical of many jobs upon which we depend in the community can no longer “afford” the available housing as it would require a large amount of their household income (>30%).

The idea is to supply housing at lower rents or prices than market rate would otherwise command so that total housing costs remain less than 30% of the total income of the household. One way of achieving these lower rents or prices takes advantage of grant funds available for this purpose from State and Federal sources to pay for the construction of the housing.

The income limits that define “Affordable Housing” are indexed off the Area Median Income (AMII) for a household as published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). To be considered

## FAQ's Regarding GHT Plans

eligible for Affordable Housing, the total household income of an applicant must be 80% of the AMI or lower as adjusted for the size of the household.

The HUD AMI for Litchfield County, the area in which Goshen lies, is \$96,800, and the 80% Income Limit figures for Goshen are as follows:

PERSONS IN FAMILY

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
80% Income Limits	\$50,350	57,550	\$64,750	\$71,900	\$77,700	\$83,450	\$89,200	\$94,950

So, for example, a family of 4 with a total household income sufficient for the housing costs to be less than 30% and no more than \$71,900 would be eligible.

You can see that these income levels would include many of the jobs of many people that we depend on in our Town such as teachers, municipal employees, some craftsmen, and retail restaurant and store staff.

### How is GHT financed?

GHT takes advantage of its 501c3 status to attract grant funding from a variety of sources. Over the last 8 years we have received grants from several local banks including Torrington Savings Bank, Union Savings, Webster Bank and a private organization called LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation) to help us with our early startup costs.

In the future, we will have access to larger grants and other forms of financing to help us with building and maintaining Affordable Housing units from sources that include the State of Connecticut, the Federal Home Loan Bank, and other programs designed to facilitate Affordable Housing.

Finally, we have welcomed the generous donations of individuals from our Town, both directly and via the annual GiveLocal event of the Connecticut Community Foundation.

Once again, GHT has never received any funding from the Town of Goshen.

### Does Litchfield County already have affordable housing?

Yes. There are many examples of successful affordable housing projects around the area that are contributing to their communities. A few examples include:

Litchfield Housing Trust, Inc. manages 47 residential units, including 2 two-family homes, 16 cooperative apartments, 10 single family homes at Tannery Brook, and 17 "scattered" single family homes. They are currently developing an additional 5 rental units and 3 homeownership units.

Kent Affordable Housing, Inc. handles 59 residential units, 24 senior and 34 affordable homes (5 in progress). 58 units are rented. 1 privately sited single-family home is owner-occupied in accordance with their "parcel program" (land-lease).

The Salisbury Housing Trust has built 10 ownership units.

The Salisbury Housing Committee owns 33 units of rental housing.

The Foundation for Norfolk Living owns 12 rental units and has a current project to build an additional 19 ownership units.

With more examples in Sharon, Cornwall, Washington, and new projects underway in Barkhamsted and Falls Village.

### Why is GHT interested in Beach Street property?

The distinct advantage of this 8.2-acre site over almost any other prospective parcel in Goshen is its right to connect with the Woodridge Lake Sewer District (WLS D). This will allow development at this site without the impact on the environment that comes with septic systems. The right of this property to have multiple-family connections to the sewers has been known to the Woodridge Lake Sewer District for 27 years and the projected flows to the sewers have been included in the District's plans, including plans for the pending connection to the Torrington Sewer Plant.

Its location in an already intensively developed area of Goshen is preferable to locating it in more rural areas of the Town.

Its proximity to Camp Cochipanee, a municipal recreation area, is another plus.

### What is GHT's planned Affordable Housing project?

GHT is still reviewing its plans for the Beach Street site and has not yet finalized them. So, while the plan may change, we are currently considering a total of 16 rental apartments with a mix of 1, 2 and 3-bedroom units. While the property has the right to connect more units of housing to the WLS D, our plan is for only 16 units; there would be no further expansion on this property at a later time.

The development will consist of four separate buildings each of which will have 4 units. There will be a mix of one-story and two-story construction and each building will be designed to give the overall appearance of a typical area single family home (see Figure 1 below).



*Figure 1 Typical Beach Street Apartment Building*

The one-story units will allow us to cater to the needs of seniors and disabled, providing a living environment without the need to go up and down stairs. We will use what are called Universal Design standards to make the units accessible to people regardless of age or disability. Even the two-story units will incorporate features such as first-floor powder rooms that make them more senior suitable.

The units will be clustered on a small portion of the total land at the center of the property. We have taken care to locate the buildings away from the neighbor properties. Additional care will be taken to shield visibility of the units from the road and from the neighboring homes using the existing trees and a careful landscaping plan. Adequate parking will be provided for all residents as well as extra spaces for visitor parking.

The buildings will be designed for energy efficiency. Beyond this, we are exploring the potential use of solar or heat pump technology to make the units as cost efficient as possible.

GHT will own the land and the units. GHT will be the landlord, and we will be a diligent landlord – we live in Goshen, too, and want this housing to be an asset to the community. We will work with a professional property management firm and will establish/apply rigorous policies and screening criteria for any resident candidate. Such criteria can include far more than the typical homeowner checks when they choose to sell their home.

GHT will pay Town taxes on the property. Today, as undeveloped property it generates very little in taxes.

We will use the rental income from these units to maintain the property and to reserve for future repairs, improvements, and replacements. GHT will ensure that the property remains an asset to the community for generations to come.

### **Who would be eligible to rent/buy a home from GHT?**

Our housing will be open to anyone interested in living here who also qualifies. Prime among those that we think will be interested are our own kids, our seniors, those who work here in Town, and those that have accepted a job here.

But just as none of us can discriminate in selling our homes, neither can GHT. We will accept applications from anyone who follows our process.

In the case of a rental unit, an applicant must first meet an income level qualifier. They must be employed. Their household income must be enough to pay the housing costs and be no more than the maximum allowed. They must also meet household size limits set for each unit.

As already noted, beyond this we will apply a consistent set of screening criteria to any applicant. These can include background criminal checks, credit history, work history, income verification, recommendations from prior landlords, prior history of legal or behavioral issues and more. We cannot apply these checks in a discriminatory way, but we can apply them fairly to all candidates.

A candidate that passes these qualifications will be welcome to live here and will be a positive contributor to our community.

### **Why does Goshen need affordable housing?**

Our young are leaving the Town for lack of suitable housing options here and our seniors have no options to stay here other than living in their way too large empty family homes. In addition, new young families are not choosing Goshen as a place to live for the same reason. The available age demographic data shows that our Town is rapidly becoming much older.

The key problem behind this trend is that the housing stock created in Goshen during the building boom of the late 1990's and early 2000's became heavily weighted in favor of large expensive single-family homes. The growth in the real estate market, in general, and in the desirability of Goshen as a place to live drove up housing and land prices significantly. Despite the crash in the housing market in the 2008-2010 timeframe, Goshen's housing stock today is 87% 3-bedroom or larger single-family homes with a median home price that is still in excess of \$380,000 – too large and too expensive for the young and seniors. And, we have no "quality rental" housing.

The result is that young individuals and families, and our seniors, lack suitable options for living here. This results in fewer volunteers for our organizations, fewer employees for our local small businesses, fewer customers for our businesses, and fewer young families looking to "trade up" and buy into our larger local homes.

The 2016 Town Plan of Conservation and Development and its "Plan Like Your Kids Live Here" community session noted these issues and recommended action as the second highest priority.

**The Goshen Housing Trust is planning an informational meeting for July 27<sup>th</sup>. Details and registration information will be circulated soon. Join us to learn more.**