

## **Planning and Development Committee Meeting**

**3 March 2008**

**Presenter: Michael H. Kennedy, Executive Director**

**King's Daughters and Sons Housing, Inc.**

**152 Westport Avenue**

**Norwalk Connecticut 06851**

My name is Michael Kennedy. I am the Executive Director of Kingsway Senior Housing located in Norwalk. Kingsway is a 128 unit not - for - profit housing facility which has, for the past 37 years, provided service rich senior housing funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Section 8/236 programs.

Kingsway, which is short for Christ the King, has a rich heritage in the inter-denominational approach to senior housing that has, as it's foundation, allowed elders to age in place with services matched by individual need. We could not have accomplished this without an acute belief that seniors are much better off living in their own home with progressive, responsive delivery of services that keep them out of long term care for as long as they are safe and secure. Our philosophy, and our caring staff, has made it possible for our most frail residents to stay out of long term care, thus saving the State of Connecticut significant dollars over the years. Kingsway is not an assisted living center, but rather an independent living facility progressively adapted to meet the growing needs of seniors as they age in place at home.

Recognizing that this type of elderly housing is a good model, HUD has provided funding for social service coordination staff, and building modifications that promote aging in place. As a spin off of the varied responsibilities of the Services Coordinator, complete in - home support is provided using a variety of community based care providers, including the wonderful Homecare Program. Essentially, countless dollars have been saved keeping our most frail elders home, in their own apartment, rather than burdening Connecticut taxpayers as they spend years, sometimes unnecessarily, residing in long term care.

In 1969, as part of the original development package, our sponsor, HUD, the City of Norwalk and the State of Connecticut collaborated to provide for the growing need for senior housing in our area. A major component of that partnership is the Connecticut Tax Abatement Program which was an integral part of our original rent up plan in 1972. Although the abatement sustained a consistent funding level for many years, since Grand List 2000 our share of the abatement has shrunk from \$52,627.00 to \$23,616.00 in 2005 to -0- for the 2006 Grand List. From a budgetary perspective, managing this 37 year old facility with shrinking Federal dollars and no Connecticut Tax Abatement makes for a significant management challenge; The question now becomes: which building related repairs or improvements do I forego? Which staff do I reduce or cut back? Worse yet, what resident related program or service do I reduce or cut?

One thing is for certain: The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development will NOT pick up the tab for the Tax Abatement Program. They will not fund emergency rent increases or regularly scheduled application for increases in the maximum permissible rent to make up for the deficit. The result: many residents ability to pay newly tooled rents linked to rent increases to make up for the deletion of the Tax Abatement Program will surely place market rent seniors in jeopardy of losing their homes.

The Tax Abatement Program completed a partnership between the not-for-profit property owner, HUD, the State of Connecticut and the municipality. I urge you to preserve the Tax Abatement Program as an imperative component in the continuation of high quality elderly housing in our great state.



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Equal Housing Opportunities