

To: Commissioner Murray, DDS

From: Susan Lamphier and on behalf of Ann Mary Genereux
Plenary Guardian for Sandra Blanchard STS Cottage 33

Re: STS Recommendations December 22, 2015

Our sister, Sandra, is a resident of STS and has been in their care for more than 50 years. During this time Sandra, who suffers from severe Autism and has the mental capacity of a three year old, has enjoyed the company of her sister residents and the care of professional, proficient and very kind caregivers. Her medical & nutritional needs are met and she is well cared for in that environment, which is so important to someone like Sandra that needs and depends on familiarity in every day of her life.

Sandra has worked in the Greenhouse at STS for many years and thoroughly enjoys the interaction with co-workers and the public. Her supervisor consistently says how well she does and how comfortable she is in the repetitious task that she does.

Because of Sandra's Autism, she requires constant adult supervision & care. She cannot cross a street by herself, does not understand the concept of handling finances, food preparation, medical care etc. Neither does her temperament adapt to changes well, and she gets very anxious with something new to her.

Sandra's family is spread across several parts of the Country and due to our situations and age are unable to provide for her needs. Several immediate family members have passed on but those remaining visit often and take Sandra for outings etc.

The family of Sandra Blanchard opposes the closing of STS and does NOT wish her to be placed in another Community Facility or in a group home setting.

Recommendation 1: Sell off a portion of STS property to a developer, retaining sufficient area for continued housing of existing residents, play & exercise areas, swimming pools etc. The top portion of the property would be ideal as there are many trees, places to take walks, the pool, areas they could revamp with special areas of benches and flower gardens they could work in. It would be their area alone and they could live their lives out, as they are able to now.

Justification: The lower property setting would be perfect for affordable Senior Housing that the State of CT & Town of Southbury is in dire need of far enough away from busy highways, yet close enough to shopping and restaurants.

Recommendation 2: Retain a portion of the STS property for park like settings, walking/biking/hiking trails and playscapes, picnic areas that can be enjoyed.

Justification: Funding for the aforementioned would come from civic groups such as Lions Clubs, Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis etc. with assistance from the Town of Southbury and State of CT.

Recommendation 3: Create Art Space-utilize some of the STS buildings for music and the Arts. Park & Recreation Departments could fill the unused buildings with people of all ages for arts & crafts, musical events, plays, outdoor movies-the list is endless. There could be workshops with a donation being accepted to help defray the cost of this endeavor. The STS clients also love open air concerts that are available now to listen to and their caregivers bring them to. They are familiar with the property and enjoy music.

Justification: There is a need for all the above listed. Funding would come from Grants & Awards, community funding, civic groups, attending residents-people would flock from other areas to this beautiful area.

There is so much that can benefit for so many in keeping STS open and providing the life the clients have lived and love, and the lands of meadows, flora and fauna that will give beauty to the land and preserve it and to people who will use it.

Thank you for your efforts to find solutions to the future of STS.