

HUD Lets Up on Glastonbury

The request is very modest.

The town of Glastonbury need only approve construction of one project to house 70 low- and moderate-income families. That means a family of four earning less than \$9,450 a year and, in the moderate income category, less than \$15,100.

For more than a year, however, the rural and wealthy Hartford suburb has balked, losing \$850,000 in federal housing and community development funds.

This week the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which at one point was going to require Glastonbury to pay back \$60,000 already spent on non-housing-related projects, let up on its pressure.

Now HUD says Glastonbury can spend its \$850,000—but only towards plans for construction of the disputed housing, which the town had turned down in April. HUD Area Director Lawrence Thompson said he thinks Glastonbury is sincere in its desire to develop another housing proposal.

That remains to be seen. The original proposal had been approved by numerous town agencies, only to be

turned down with a flimsy excuse by the council, 7-1.

Approval of the project was a condition of the original \$910,000 grant.

Meanwhile, the town agreed to build housing for the elderly, a traditional ploy used by towns which want federal housing monies but not low-income minority families. HUD didn't buy it.

HUD actually is being more generous than need be. It is allowing the town to keep the \$60,000 it already spent and will release the rest of the money after a low- and moderate-income housing project is approved.

Glastonbury now has a chance to prove that its high-sounding resolution in favor of low-income housing, passed unanimously by the council after its sound rejection of the low-income project, was more than political maneuvering to restore the lost funds.

If Glastonbury wants housing money, it should provide housing for all. One project housing 70 families earning up to \$15,000 for a family of four and more than \$18,000 for a family of eight or more persons, is really very little to ask. A wealthy suburb of a poor city like Hartford can do more.