

Belmont Housing Trust – Minutes for June 29, 2022 Meeting

Present: Thayer Donham, Judie Feins, Rachel Heller, Gloria Leipzig, Betsy Lipson, Mike Marotta, Benny Meshoulam, Paul Rickter, Judy Singler

Guests: Robert Hummel (Belmont Senior Town Planner)

The meeting was called to order at 7:37pm

Minutes

Several sets of minutes are ready for approval, but because this topic was omitted from the agenda, minutes will be approved at the next meeting.

Multifamily Zoning: Update and Vote on a Representative to MBTA Communities Advisory Committee

Robert Hummel reported that the Select Board (SB) has created an MBTA Communities Advisory Committee to advise the SB on the multifamily zoning changes. The Housing Trust will have a seat on this committee. Betsy Lipson nominated Rachel Heller and Judy Singler seconded. Voted unanimously to appoint Heller to this position.

Hummel reported that zoning changes by the town will be needed by the Fall of 2023, but a plan of action will be needed before the end of 2022. Lipson asked about the timing of the Housing Production Plan (HPP) and Heller answered that the old HPP will expire in May 2023, so we will need to approve the new HPP before the multifamily zoning changes are approved.

Public Housing Update

Gloria Leipzig reported that the Belmont Town Meeting approved \$400k of CPA money to start planning for redevelopment of Sherman Gardens. Several years ago, CPA funding was approved to study possible redevelopment work at Belmont Village and the Housing Authority is getting feedback from residents of Belmont Village about potential changes.

Housing Trust Election Discussion

Heller noted that we will be electing a chair or co-chairs at a future meeting. Lipson suggested that the role of clerk is important and can be a good way for a newer person to learn the details of the committee's work. The committee agreed to hold a vote on officers in September.

Community Preservation Act: Review RFP and Scoring Matrix

Heller reported on the \$250k CPA grant and the process for requesting applications for this funding. A subcommittee has been working on the RFP and scoring matrix and we are close to finalizing this. Discussion on setting the timeline when applications would be considered -- likely on a rolling basis. Hummel suggested that "RFP" has specific legal meaning and we should use alternative language to avoid confusion.

The committee reviewed the funding application document. Leipzig suggested clarifying the reference to "acquisition" and we concluded that moving acquisition under pre-development activities was the best solution. The committee decided that applications would be taken on a rolling basis starting on September 1, 2022. Applications would not be accepted after December

31, 2024. On the topic of criteria, Benny Meshoulam suggested that greater weight will be given to applications that address lower level incomes. Meshoulam asked whether we have clarity around what "measurable impact" means and we concluded that the language should say that the impact is creating affordable housing.

On the matrix, Meshoulam asked whether we can set a minimum standard that would meet our approval. Discussion on the fact that we would prefer this money be used to help make an affordable housing development possible, rather than simply buying down an additional affordable unit in a development that's already going to happen anyway. Leipzig will work on a revised version of the documents, with input from Mike Marotta, and will bring it to our next meeting.

Moraine Street Discussion

Lipson introduced the topic of a possible site for developing mixed income housing on Moraine Street. Marotta presented one possible layout of modules with six apartments per module (4 2BR units and 2 3BR units) on the property. He also presented some illustrations of what the buildings would look like in comparison to existing buildings on the street. Meshoulam suggested that we will need to get feedback from the neighborhood about what people want with this parcel of land as part of moving forward with a project like this. Discussion about how to put together a vision for developing this property, which is currently under-utilized and not an attractive element in the neighborhood, especially in a way that incorporates the wishes of the neighborhood. Next steps: Lipson and Heller will reach out to the property owner to share these ideas for this property.

Discuss Boston University Report on Representation in the Housing Process

Heller mentioned a report that the Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) worked on with Boston University on participation in public meetings on housing. The report found that there is over-representation by property owners and particularly white property owners in these meetings. The report includes some good examples of ways to make public meetings more inclusive, including work that Newton has done to broaden participation in their discussion on zoning changes. Link to report: <https://www.tbf.org/-/media/tbf/reports-and-covers/2022/june/final-representation-in-the-housing-process-report-20220615.pdf>

Other Business

Heller announced the work on the Housing Production Plan (HPP) is moving forward, with meetings happening in July to start work on this. The current HPP is effective until May 2023.

Adjourned 9:27pm - moved Feins, seconded by Heller, voted unanimously

Submitted by Paul Rickter