

Belmont Housing Trust – Minutes for May 31, 2018 Meeting

2018 JUL 19 AM 9:08

Present: Helen Bakeman, Chuck Clark, Judie Feins, Rachel Heller, Gloria Leipzig, Betsy Lipson, Tommasina Olson, Paul Rickter, Judy Singler

Absent: Madeline Fraser Cook, Alisa Gardner-Todreas

Guests: Julie Perkins (League of Women Voters), Jennifer Van Campen (Metrowest Collaborative Development), Tom Caputo (Board of Selectmen)

The meeting was called to order by Judie at 7:39pm.

Minutes. The minutes of the April 19, 2018 meeting were approved with three amendments.

Meeting with Tom Caputo. Tom Caputo, new member of the Board of Selectmen, brought good news, announcing that the state has approved the Housing Production Plan! We held a wide-ranging conversation with Tom about affordable housing issues. We discussed the potential for developing more senior housing in Belmont, including at the McLean property and along South Pleasant Street. Chuck reported that after a long quiet period, it appears that McLean is starting to pursue development in their property that is zoned for senior housing. Rachel asked that, as plans for Waverley Square development go forward, that housing for families remain a priority. Also, we discussed the prospects of "friendly 40-B" or 40-R projects in Belmont as strategies for developing more affordable housing.

Tom asked what were the big issues facing the Housing Trust. Gloria identified implementing the Housing Production Plan (HPP). Now that we have an HPP and a fund, we can start to work with developers to potentially get more affordable units in town. Judy reported that housing is a big topic for the Council on Aging (COA), with plans for a housing-oriented event every other month. Rachel mentioned that we could do more to allow accessory apartments, to help seniors stay in their homes. Tom expressed enthusiasm for the HPP, but asked how we'd meet the goals set there. Rachel emphasized the idea of a placemaking process for Waverley Square. Gloria mentioned the improvements to public housing that are outlined in the HPP as a good area to pursue. Betsy asked hypothetically what might happen if a church property were to come available -- in that scenario, how could we encourage the congregation to consider affordable housing as an option?

Updates from the Town & Planning Board. Chuck reported on the process for improving the documents to be used for the affordable unit lottery at the Bradford. The BHT has reviewed the documents and will meet with Toll Brothers, the developer of the Bradford, to go over the changes that are needed. The BHT needs to approve the documents before the Planning Board will let the project proceed to the next steps. Also, Gloria reported that the Housing Choice Initiative application was not submitted, on the grounds that the HPP had not been approved by the application deadline. We will plan to pursue this next year.

Community Preservation Act (CPA) Application for Trust Fund Set-Aside. Town Meeting has approved the trust fund and the grant agreement with the town is with town counsel. Rachel suggested that the Housing Institute training on June 6 and 7 is a good opportunity to learn more about how we can proceed. Judie noted that we need to decide what our priorities are, so we can make the most of this fund. Agreed that a discussion with Jean Delios of Reading, who is planning to be our guest at our June meeting, would be a good place to start.

Meetings and Follow Up. Judy reported that the materials from the May 4 conference on Chapter 40-B are now online -- Rachel will share the link with the committee. Also, Judie noted that the June 12 Council on Aging event will focus on senior housing. For that meeting, Jen offered help from Metrowest

Collaborative Development in providing information for seniors on thinking about future housing plans. Gloria mentioned that there's a YIMBY (Yes In My Back Yard) meeting in Cambridge on June 9.

Housekeeping. New officers will be elected at our July meeting. Gloria and Judie will not continue as co-chairs. Also, Betsy expressed interest in figuring out how to better manage sharing of documents within the committee.

We agreed to reschedule our next meeting to June 28. At that meeting, we will talk to Jean Delios, Reading Assistant Town Manager. After that meeting, we should invite Planning Board members Edward Sanderson and Thayer Donham to our July 19 meeting. Betsy suggested inviting to future meetings developers who have done work in other towns to talk about what worked.

The committee adjourned at 9:46pm.

Submitted by Paul Rickter