

**Belmont Housing Trust – Minutes for June 28, 2018 Meeting**

2018 JUL 23 AM 9: 07

**Present:** Chuck Clark, Madeline Fraser Cook, Alisa Gardner-Todreas, Rachel Heller, Gloria Leipzig, Tommasina Olson, Paul Rickter, Judy Singler

**Absent:** Helen Bakeman, Judie Feins, Betsy Lipson

**Guests:** Julie Perkins (League of Women Voters), Jeffrey Wheeler (Belmont Senior Town Planner), Jean Delios (Reading Assistant Town Manager)

The meeting was called to order by Gloria at 7:43pm.

**Meeting with Jean Delios.** We heard a presentation by Jean Delios, Assistant Town Manager of Reading, on initiatives to increase production of affordable housing. Jean started by stating that planning is the hard part; figure out where more density is OK and you're halfway there. She outlined the history of recent affordable developments in Reading, including several 40-B projects that weren't well-sited, and two 40-R (smart growth) districts that have been much more successful -- 40-R districts approved by Town Meeting in 2009. The experience of 40-B was a powerful incentive to get Town Meeting approval. They have also done a comprehensive update to their zoning bylaws for which they hired a consultant (but don't recommend doing that). Under the new bylaws, the Planning Board can approve waivers on anything except affordable units. Because their work on affordable housing (98 affordable units produced in 2017 and reached 10% goal), they have been given a two-year safe harbor status. Committee had questions about how they did this - some things that were parts of the process: setting up a regional housing alliance with two other communities, public forums to get feedback on priority areas for development, hiring Metropolitan Area Planning Council to help with plans, several state grants to help pay for planning. Jean mentioned that they developed metrics to study the impact on school enrolment, which showed minimal increase because the units added have tended to attract young professionals and empty nesters. Rachel asked about an increase in town income due to the added housing units and Jean replied that there was a small increase but Reading really needs a larger commercial property base (like Belmont, more than 95% of their tax base is residential). Responding to another question from Rachel, Jean noted that objections have mellowed somewhat now that projects are done, particularly once the disruption of construction was over. Gloria asked about experience with non-profit developers. Jean replied that it was discussed in Reading but nothing came to fruition, but Peabody made it work, using some inclusionary zoning money. Gratitude to Jean Delios for her presentation.

**Minutes.** The minutes of the May 28, 2018 meeting were approved with two amendments.

**Updates from the Town & Planning Board.** Chuck announced that Edward Sanderson has resigned from the Planning Board (PB). Because he was on the subcommittee discussing plans for Waverley Square and South Pleasant, the PB will need time to reorganize this subcommittee. Gloria reported on the meeting with Toll Brothers on the documents for the affordable units lottery at The Bradford. They are still working on revisions, but they accept that changes are needed. A follow up meeting will occur on July 9. Gloria noted that the inclusionary zoning bylaw lacks text that allows residents in affordable units to stay in their homes when they experience an increase in income; this is allowed under state law. She asked if there are other changes we want to make, such as increasing the percentage of affordable units. Alisa commented that renegotiating inclusionary zoning percentages was planned during the process that led to The Bradford development. Chuck argued that a negotiating a higher percentage of affordable units could be worked out with a developer without going through Town Meeting. Gloria asked that we discuss further at our next meeting. Jeffrey noted that we should review the Buyout section (6.10.5) when we're reviewing other possible changes. Gloria asked about the potential for affordable senior housing at McLean property and South Pleasant and suggested two developers, B'nai B'rith and Jewish Community Housing for the Elderly, who develop mixed income and affordable senior housing.

**Community Preservation Act (CPA) Application for Trust Fund Set-Aside.** Gloria reported that the trust agreement is currently with Town Administrator Patrice Garvin.

**Meetings and Follow Up.** Gloria and Judy reported on the Massachusetts Housing Partnership Conference, citing interesting ideas on pegging inclusionary zoning on 50% of area median income instead of 80% and the example of a multi-site 40-B project in a town. Gloria reported on the June 9 YIMBY (Yes In My Back Yard) meeting in Cambridge, noting that a YIMBY conference is being planned for September. Gloria and Judie attended a June 12 Council on Aging (COA) meeting where there was interest in discussing affordable and market-rate senior housing. They gathered email addresses of people interested in this topic. Gloria also mentioned that there will be a July 17 training on how committee members should handle issues surrounding the Belmont High School debt exclusion vote on the November ballot.

**Housekeeping.** Alisa and Helen will be ending their service on the Housing Trust. Hopefully Madeline will be reappointed. Judie will follow up with the Town to confirm the number of members that we have is correct. Officers will be elected at the July meeting. Rachel suggested some ideas for developers who have worked with other towns on projects involving CPA money - as a way of exploring what we might be able to do in Belmont.

The committee adjourned at 9:40pm.

Submitted by Paul Rickter