

MEETING AGENDA - REVISED
Housing Trust
Thursday, September 17, 2020

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

DATE: January 19, 2021
TIME: 9:12 AM

Attendees: Judie Feins, Judy Singler, Tomi Olson, Gloria Leipzig, Madeline Fraser Cook, Thayer Donham, Rachel Heller, Betsy Lipson

Guest: Franklin Tucker

Emergency Rental Assistance Program Update

- Betsy Lipson provided update from MetroWest Collaborative Development (MWDC). Tomorrow Gloria will inquire about eligibility for screening the applicants, and MWCD's estimated date for submitting an invoice for October 1st payments.
- Status from MWCD:
 - 34 approved: 6 @ 80% AMI, 11 @ 60% AMI and 17 @ 30% AMI
 - 6 ineligible applicants
 - Remainder of applicants still incomplete and in progress.

McLean

- Housing Trust voted unanimously in favor of this Town Meeting article
- Rachel plans to make a statement saying the Housing Trust supports this development, and that we look forward to supporting developments that are open to all populations in the future.

CPA FY21

- Community Preservation Committee is accepting preliminary applications on October 4, 2020. Applications should be sent to Elizabeth Dionne or Glen Castro.
- Judy moves that Trust submits an application for \$250K of CPA funds for purpose of supporting affordable housing development.
- Betsy will update the previously used proposal and send it to Gloria and Rachel before submitting.

Beatrice Circle

- Rachel provides an overview of the updated proposal from the developer.
- Discussion:
 - Is the basement being considered a bedroom unit, does that comply?
 - Curiosity about the developer's jump to 4-BR and whether there's a market for this.
 - Proximity to neighbors, within the five feet of setback, seems unlikely to meet building code; however, sprinklers are provided.
 - Seems there may be compelling public safety concerns, but unsure whether these will be a problem in term of health and safety laws.

- Opinion expressed that this could work and yet there may need to be some modifications.
- Appreciate how the Select Board concluded the letter.

Update on community outreach

- Housing Trust produced a show on affordable housing in Belmont; it is posted on Belmont Media Center.
- Discussion raised for developing a strategy to raise awareness of this presentation and affordable housing in town. Ideas:
 - School district email (they might send it)
 - List serv, FB groups,
 - Present to a smaller group as informational and then open up discussion on ideas for ways to advance housing development in town (BAR might be amenable)
 - LWV used to do brown bags: would they do a virtual brownbag?
 - Town Meeting precinct meetings: Could this be made as a presentation prior to precinct meeting, and someone from the HT joins and facilitates the discussion. Known precinct leads:
 - Precinct 6 & 5: Phil Thayer, Julie Crocker
 - Precinct 3: Bonnie Friedman
 - Precinct 1: Fred Paulsen
 - Precinct 8: Scott Stratford, Paul Rickter, Paul Roberts
 - Send Town Meeting Members an informational email with link to this
 - Reach out to Senior Center. They are open to topical discussions.
- Citizen Forum recently published two articles on affordable housing. Discussion on whether the Trust should respond to correct the record.
 - Gloria and Judie volunteered to draft a response.

Discuss annual planning and goal setting

- This was our first discussion on annual planning. It was an open discussion with a variety of comments, including:
 - Waverley Square was raised before McLean overtook our focus. We had the idea of submitting an application to Urban Land Institute (ULI) for a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) using a grant Belmont received for planning purposes. This would initiate community engagement on vision setting for the Waverley area.
 - Rachel will follow up with Jeffrey on status of this application to ULI.
 - We need to focus our efforts on the outcomes we want to achieve. Establish clear goals (such as a vision for Waverly). Delineate tasks to move forward on these goals. Assign roles so that each of us knows how to get involved and knows who is responsible for moving forward on which task. Let's build on what worked with our McLean work.
 - Continue to broadcast 40B: what it is, how it works, how we can use our HPP to take control of production and development.

- Showcase progress on our HPP objectives to demonstrate that our past actions have yielded outcomes (i.e., Inclusionary Zoning, McLean development, etc.).
- Refer to McLean as a friendly 40B and explain how the process worked. (However, we need to be cautious that using the term “friendly” naturally means anything not quite that gets considered “hostile.”)
- The Bradford’s rents are not affordable. This is unlike the prices available in two-family units in Cushing area. Track the price of rents in that neighborhood to see what The Bradford’s presence might be doing to influence pricing over time.
- Consider with Beatrice what we understand the town is “willing to accept.” Are there ways that as a Trust we can encourage smaller developments? What will these new prospective developments *look like*? This influences what people might think when they consider the word “affordable” housing.
- Should we review and consider updating our inclusionary zoning again?
- Our role with the McLean developer was that we convinced the developer there was a market interest in a different type of development. Can we as Trust find developers willing to work with us on win-win vision?
- Consider and actively reach out to churches regarding their properties.
- Same as the property near BHS (the industrial plant).
- Issue of Real Estate Investment Trusts (REIT) or investors buying two- and three-family houses in town, renovating them and then charging much higher rents than current. Is this a town-wide concern? Worth tracking?
 - Identify if there are federal/state funds available to landlords. Then get the word out to in-town landlords about this.
- Expanding the HT membership: can we determine if we have an opportunity to fill Jeremy’s seat since he has not attended meetings this year?

Minutes

- July 23 approved
- August 13 approved
- August 25 approved

Meeting adjourned 9:18pm

Minutes submitted by Betsy Lipson September 17, 2020