

## **Belmont Housing Trust – Minutes for August 18, 2022 Meeting**

**Present:** Judie Feins, Rachel Heller, Gloria Leipzig, Betsy Lipson, Paul Rickter, Benjamin Meshoulam, Madeline Fraser-Cook, Mike Marotta, Mark Kagan

**Guests:** Bonnie Friedman

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TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: September 16, 2022  
TIME: 9:06 AM

Meeting called to order 7:31

New Trust Member Mark Kagan introduced himself.

### **Minutes**

- July 21: Lipson moved to accept the minutes, Heller seconded. Vote to accept: Heller, Lipson, Rickter. Abstained: Feins, Marotta, Meshoulam, Kagan.

### **MBTA Multifamily Zoning**

Heller provided an update:

- Belmont might be a model for other communities in that a MBTA zoning committee has been appointed by the Planning Committee comprised of representatives from multiple groups across town. At this point the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion working group has not completed committee appointments and so has not yet appointed someone to the MBTA committee
- State issued final guidance this past week. Heller notes key points in the final version are: community categories have been updated; Belmont is now considered in the category “commuter rail community”; Belmont must zone for 1,635 homes; zoning must be 50 acres but this can be divided; the final deadline for completed zoning is December 31, 2024.
- Technical assistance is available from the state, including that MHP is putting out a compliance tool that will enable communities to double check if their proposed plan meets the requirements.
- Housing Trust’s role is that we have a member (Heller) on the committee. In addition, the HPP is in development which will point to places in town where development is recommended.

### **Belmont’s Senior Planner is leaving his position September 2**

- Discussion about the multiple planning-related efforts underway right now. Heller agrees to reach out to the Town Administrator to express the Trust’s interest in having the Town consider temporary hiring of consultant(s) to ensure continued progress.

### **Moraine Street**

Marotta provided an update:

- Marotta met with Town planning staff to discuss the site under consideration. The site is near a 100-year flood zone and there is potentially a 100-foot set back requirement. Planning staff raised the possibility that this site might be part of the MBTA zoning.

- Discussion: owner has the possibility of working with the town on a Local Initiative Program (LIP). This could offer a better approach than waiting for the MBTA zoning given the owner might need the Town to work with them on permitting. Marotta suggests perhaps a simpler, smaller design would keep the project below the LIP profit cap.

## **Housing Production Plan**

Lipson provided an update:

- HPP team includes the following: two Belmont planning staff, staff from Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Feins and Lipson, and Metro West Community Development (MWCD). Feins is managing MWCD's role on behalf of Belmont donors who invested in a tax credit that awarded funds to MWCD for this project.
- Project will kick off in September. MAPC is launching a public website to inform residents about the process and provide project updates. MWCD will conduct 4-5 focus groups with underrepresented stakeholders. An HPP Advisory Working Group is forming that will be comprised of up to 10 representatives of other committees and town leaders. MAPC will lead on collecting data and in November issuing a survey and hosting the first of two community engagement forums. The project will run for five months and conclude with recommendations and an updated HPP report.
- Discussion: the HPP needs a creative name that reflects the town. MAPC encouraged the Trust to generate words and phrases that reflect Belmont and this initiative. Suggestions included:
  - Town of Homes for All
  - Belmont's Healthy Future
  - Shaping Belmont's Future
  - Building Community Together
  - Sharing What Belmont Has to Offer

## **Review of CPA Award Scoring matrix**

- Fraser-Cook provided background on the subcommittee's work from several months ago on the development of the scoring matrix. Primary intent was to give more points for deeper affordability. Other objectives were to reward developers who know how to build sustainably and know how their way around different nationally recognized sustainability standards, and to prioritize developments with higher numbers of homes because of Belmont's needs. In addition, site control and access to public funding were considered highly important for expediting development. Finally, experience in developing affordable, sustainable housing in places that are akin to Belmont were considered critical to making affordable housing a reality in Belmont.
- Lipson explained the exercise she and Leipzig developed for the Trust to 'road test' the scoring matrix in a group discussion (attachment).
- Discussion about the draft scoring matrix:
  - Public funds – can we eliminate this reference since we are scoring on demonstrated capacity in affordable housing?

- Should the sustainability scoring have more step down in number of points? By holding to the specific certifications, we are using existing standards that are based on reducing carbon emissions.
- Scoring: the amount being provided is not a lot relative to development costs. It will not make a difference to incentivize the developer to make big moves on affordability or sustainability. The size of the grant is more likely to help with technical assistance on greening measures, or, for interested developers it would help them look stronger going after public funds.
- Will there be a grant agreement between the awardee and the Town? Grant agreement might allow for some flexibility on items other than the number of affordable homes. Trust will need to have the Town attorney prepare this document.
- This CPA grant award needs to be spent in 3.5 years from the date of the signed grant agreement (May 2022).
- Should there be an application due date or rolling due date? Perhaps we start with a due date then be ready to change to rolling? After discussion, there is agreement that we will make this rolling due date.
- Should we reach out to Northland's developer about creating one more affordable unit with this grant? Current estimate to build one unit in the Boston area is \$600K.
- If only one application comes in, do we give away all the funds? Not if applicant only meets inclusionary zoning requirements! The proposed project needs to be more than that. Trust wants to establish a good track of spurring development in Town that reflects our Town's needs.
- Should we focus only on affordability for this first round? Agreement this is a good idea and then we can add additional scoring measures in subsequent years if we are awarded more funds. Knowing the MBTA zoning will generate development interest, we have additional criteria ready to adopt when there will be multiple applicants. Agreement that we need to establish minimum criteria including site control, number over inclusionary zoning, depth of affordability below 80%.
- Subcommittee will revise the scoring matrix and present it for discussion in the September meeting.

Meeting adjourned 9:35pm - moved Heller, seconded by Rickter, voted unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Betsy Lipson.