

## **Belmont Housing Trust – Minutes for December 22, 2022 Meeting**

**Present:** Rachel Heller, Judie Feins, Mark Kagan, Paul Rickter, Gloria Leizpig, Madeleine Fraser Cook, Mike Marotta (joined at 7:45)

**Guest:** Gabriel Distler (Town Planner), Jackie Dobson

Meeting Called to order 7:35

### **Updates:**

#### **Housing Production Plan**

Gabriel and Judie provided an update:

- Metrowest has held two focus groups (hybrid) in early November and December. Separately MAPC held 1 community engagement session in November and will hold another one in March.
- Need a housing trust hosted virtual event about opportunities for HPP Late January/Early February. Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) will provide maps.
  - Discussed whether we should do the late January meeting – is it worth the effort. Are there any gaps from the two focus groups. Have visuals/drone photos made it out beyond MAPC to be presented (not in focus group).
  - Judie to check with MWCD to see can help organize, do outreach, and write report to MAPC.
  - Madeline Moved for Housing Trust to host a meeting in January, if MWCD can help. Mark Seconded. All voted in favor
  - Judie moved to form a subcommittee consisting of Mark, Judie, Gloria to help plan the meeting. Rachel seconded. All voted in favor
- Making a lot of progress on HPP and moving quickly. Reasonable survey response, 300+ responses.

#### **MBTA Multifamily Zoning Update**

Rachel and Gabriel provided an update:

- Committee includes representatives from Housing Trust, DEI, Select Board, Planning Board, Historical District Planning Commission.
- Started on an action plan (needs to be submitted by end of Jan, 2023) and let state know if we are already in compliance. Action plan involves how we plan to do the work in town, the kinds of zoning we are considering and what we hope to learn through community engagement.
- Will Start to share this in January to community and town meeting, with technical assistance from MAPC.

#### **Community Preservation Act: updates on pending application and current allocation**

- Housing Trust applied for \$250,000 that we could invest in affordable housing development.
- Belmont Housing Authority (BHA) met in December to approve projects, waiting until January to make final decision. One question that was discussed was availability of funding – insufficient funds to cover projects.

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DATE: March 16, 2023  
TIME: 9:09 AM

- It was proposed in CPC meeting to set some money aside in reserve for projects, to be discussed in January, as well if any projects can be deferred or pared back and to rank applications that have come in so far.
- Funding down to \$3000. This does not include money allocated by the state that hasn't come through – waiting to see the amount, hopefully before January meeting.
- BHA is moving together with Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) to re-develop Sherman Gardens, and potentially adding 40 additional units there. Applying for \$400,000 for community preservation, which will go towards architectural drawing and zoning process.
- Would like to get housing trust support for the project, for which BHA has drafted a letter for Housing Trust to endorse.
  - Discussion: Whether to support BHA's application.
  - Questions around how much open space is there and the plan
    - Increasing apartments from 400 sq ft to 600 Sq ft per Apartment+ more common space and elevators, many ideas and possibilities.
  - Rachel Heller moved to support BHA's application. Paul seconded. All voted In approval
  - Discussed whether parking limitation can get in the way of the development. Smart Growth America (SGA) may have resources on how to help fight that. Need to be able to talk about it.

### **Discussion on federal HOME fund**

Gloria, Judie, Rachel provided update:

- Belmont has access to \$50,000 per year for Housing development -broad uses. Process for organization to request those funds. Robert (Planner) has put in an application for those funds.
- BHA will come to Housing Trust to seek approval of those funds for Sherman Gardens. Need a citizen's participation plan.
  - Madeline clarified: Consortium (led by Newton with surrounding towns) works directly with HUD. Consortium reports as if it is an entitlement community and report and develop all the plans.
  - Citizen Participation plan already exists – it is compliant and current within the con Plan.
- \$49K for Sherman Gardens and \$100,000 that Belmont has and can use. Can use in addition to the two CPC grants for \$600,000 total.
- Need someone to look into how to access the money. Madeline agreed to take a look at the e-mail and come up with next steps.
- Related – HOME-ARP (American Rescue Plan) funds – funding for homelessness prevention. We should take advantage of TA coming out with HOME-ARP plans as it is new rules.

### **Public Comments**

- Questions about how to get information out to the whole community.
  - Groups that don't get it are the renters, have gotten mailers out in the past. Can put flyers in electric bills

Paul Rickter announced his retirement from the committee. He was thanked for his many years of service.

Meeting adjourned at 9:12 PM. Moved by Heller, seconded by Rickter, voted unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Mark Kagan