

Belmont Housing Trust Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Remote Meeting
Aug. 10, 2021

Attendees: Rachel Heller, Judie Feins, Gloria Leipzig, Tomi Olson, Judy Singler
Guests: Robert Hummel, Town senior planner; Jack Dawley, Northland Residential Corp.

The meeting opened at 8:35 AM to discuss the affordable homeownership units at McLean. Its purpose was to develop recommendations for the full Trust to consider at its September meeting (Sept. 2).

Background: The Inclusionary Housing language of the Belmont zoning bylaw (Section 6.10) sets the following requirement:

6.10.2 Definitions: Comparable Unit "... the location of the Affordable Housing Units and the bedroom distribution of such units must be no different from that of the Market Rate Housing Unit."

During the July 29 Trust meeting, there was an initial discussion focused on the finishes, size distribution, and locations of the 6 affordable homeownership units. The developer's proposal was for one 1BR unit and five 2BR units; the 1BR is to be located in the historic chapel, while the other five were all interior units with 2- or 3BR market-rate end units on either side. Based on a tour of Northland's current Wellesley development (Fieldstone Way) and a document provided afterward, issues regarding the finishes focused on countertops, tub surrounds, and flooring.

The subcommittee, after discussing these issues, indicated that the following recommendations be brought to the full Trust for a vote:

- Unit size distribution—the subcommittee liked the idea of a 1BR affordable unit, because it would have a lower price and could be attractive to the large number of Belmont seniors living alone or as couples. Northland has proposed that the remainder of the affordable units all be 2BR units, but this is not consistent with the IZ bylaw. The subcommittee recommends having 1 3BR affordable unit.
- Unit location—instead of all interior units (other than the Chapel 1BR), the subcommittee recommends that one of the 4 remaining 2BR units be an end unit.
- Unit finishes—for durability and lower long-term replacement costs, the subcommittee recommends that: a) countertops be made of Corian or quartz rather than laminate; b) instead of acrylic tub surrounds, all units have walk-in showers with tile and/or Corian or quartz finishes; c) the laminate flooring on the main floor of these units will be quite cold, because of unheated basements (with heat pumps). This needs further discussion; we hope to have someone from the Energy Committee at the Sept. 2 meeting to address this.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judie Feins