

Belmont Housing Trust – Minutes for May 9, 2019 Meeting

2019 JUL 31 AM 9:17

Present: Judie Feins, Rachel Heller, Betsy Lipson, Paul Rickter, Jeremy Romanul, Judy Singler, Joe Zarro

Absent: Chuck Clark, Madeline Fraser Cook, Gloria Leipzig, Tommasina Olson

Guests: Roger Colton, Energy Committee; Fred Paulsen; Deven O'Toole; Susan Gittelman, CEO of B'nai B'rith Housing

The meeting was called to order by Betsy at 7:36pm.

Guest Speaker: Roger Colton. Roger is the co-chair of the Belmont Energy Committee and introduced the Climate Action Plan. The good news is that our emissions have declined, but the bad news is that we're not declining fast enough to meet the target of 80% reduction of emissions by 2050. Good progress has been done in recent years on energy audits, residential solar panel installations, and electric vehicles. Next step is to focus on residential vehicles and home heating -- we need to electrify our vehicles and home heating. The advantage of electricity is that Belmont Light is our electricity source and they have committed to reaching 100% emission-free electricity by 2022.

Roger explained that the Energy Committee is reaching out to all Town committees help make sure that we all work collaboratively on these goals. Specifically, the Energy Committee is concerned about the McLean property and would like to make sure that whatever is done on the McLean property is zero net energy. And they would like to review the Zoning Bylaws from a climate change perspective -- by putting together a working group to do this review. Rachel recommended that Madeline be considered for inclusion in that task force. Roger also suggested that work could be done, possibly using CPA money, to upgrade the Housing Authority disabled housing property on Clark Road for more efficient energy use.

McLean Development. Judy introduced the recent work of the Subcommittee on McLean Zoning. The subcommittee met on May 2 with Susan Gittelman of B'nai B'rith Housing. Rachel announced that our request for assistance from Mass Housing Partnership on McLean has been approved. Reviewed the state of the McLean project, including timing and the status of the Memorandum of Agreement. Fred noted that it's crucial that the Housing Trust work with partners to help make sure a plan can be accepted at Town Meeting. Joe recommended that we should be working with with partners (Council on Aging, Energy Committee, Historic Commission) to develop a list of requirements for this piece of land. Discussion about the status of senior housing on South Pleasant, which is moving slowly at this point. On McLean, Betsy suggested that the subcommittee focus on the topics that need to be clarified for us to move forward, such as the idea of subdividing into smaller parcels.

Susan introduced the work that B'nai B'rith Housing does in developing housing in the Boston area. They work closely with municipalities on developing housing that makes sense for the community and they are curious to explore opportunities in Belmont. Judie asked Susan for ideas about how to proceed on the McLean property. Susan replied that there is room for common ground with McLean and the developer to work with the town. Betsy suggested that there may be room to subdivide Zone 3 to involve a second developer which focuses on affordable housing, to complement the school and a market-rate development. The committee agreed that we should do a field trip to walk through the McLean property to get a better understanding of it.

Rachel will reach out to the Mass Housing Partnership to start working them. The subcommittee will meet next Wednesday to start constructing a timeline and establishing a vision. Fred suggested involving partners before the summer.

Minutes. Consideration of minutes will be done at our June meeting.

The committee adjourned at 9:35pm.

Submitted by Paul Rickter