

Housing Trust Meeting Minutes
August 13, 2020 Remote Meeting
7:30 – 9:30 PM

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TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

DATE: November 20, 2020
TIME: 9:27 AM

AGENDA

1. Status of Emergency Rental Assistance Program
2. Discuss/develop outreach/awareness/education plan
3. Update on McLean
4. General Business to approve minutes (reserve minimum 20 minutes)

Attendees: Paul Rickter, Judie Feins, Rachel Heller, Betsy Lipson, Joe Zarro

Absent: Jeremy Romanul, Judy Singler, Thayer Donham, Tommasina Olsen, Gloria Leipzig

Guests: Julie Perkins, League of Women Voters

1. Emergency Rental Assistance Program update

The latest figures from Merkisha of Metro West Collaborative Development (Metro West) are: 41 applications received; responded to 152 emails and 64 phone calls. The advertised deadline is August 14. There have been SNAFUs in downloading and uploading applications.

Rachel talked with Jen (who is on vacation); they are expecting more applications by the deadline, and during the week of August 17-21 will be checking them for completeness. It may be useful to do a drive-up at the Belmont Housing Authority if there is a lot of missing paperwork.

In Newton, Metro West is seeing people newly re-employed but with accumulated rent arrearages. How should these be handled in the Belmont program?

The Trust discussed whether and how to advertise the program further. Should the deadline be extended? This was tabled until the subcommittee meeting on August 19, when more will be known.

2. Awareness campaign

Rachel and Betsy are working with the Media Center on a 45-minute presentation. It will include interviews with 2 residents of Royal Belmont.

It was proposed that the Trust hold an off-cycle meeting to go over the basics of federal and state housing programs for members who wish to learn more.

3. Update on McLean

There's no news on McLean. Rachel reviewed recent research on the market for age-restricted housing, but there was nothing conclusive about whether or not that market is becoming saturated in the Boston area.

Even for age-restricted housing, DHCD requires that there be 10% 3BR units. Thus, if the age restriction posed occupancy problems in the future, the BR size mix would not be a problem; however, a later change would require both a zoning amendment and modifying the deed restriction that will be put in place for the development. NB: It's important to keep an eye on the distribution of 3BR units across the age-restricted components and not have them all in the townhouses. This is a matter for the Planning Board in site plan review.

The Trust needs to continue thinking about what should be said at Sept. Town Meeting on the McLean zoning. Something like: "The Housing Trust is supporting this zoning, but next time there should be no age restriction." Talking points will be reviewed at the Sept.10 meeting.

4. General Business

The minutes of the 7/23 meeting were returned to Betsy with suggestions for revisions.

The minutes of the August 5 subcommittee meeting, with edits, were unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Judie Feins