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**Belmont Housing Trust – Minutes for August 24, 2017 Meeting
DRAFT**

Present: Helen Bakeman, Judie Feins, Rachel Heller, Gloria Leipzig, Betsy Lipson, Tommasina Olson, Paul Rickter

Absent: Liz Allison, Alisa Gardner-Todreas, Judy Singler

Guests: none

Minutes. The minutes of the July 20, 2017 meeting were approved with one amendment.

Membership update. The committee welcoming new BHT member Betsy Lipson.

Updates from the Town. No town staff were present to report, but members of the committee shared information that they had learned recently. Some of the affordable units at Royal Belmont are now apparently occupied! The Bradford project appears to be moving forward slowly. There was discussion about reaching out to the Bradford developer on how to make the application process for the affordable units less onerous than it had been at Royal Belmont. Gloria will look into connecting the developer with the Belmont Housing Authority on this.

Planning Board (PB) Updates. Liz was not present to report, but members commented on recent PB issues, notably the Waverley Square housing/library idea that has been the subject of several recent public meetings. Tomi expressed concern that the negative reaction to both the process and the library part of the idea was obscuring the merits of the housing part of the idea. Rachel responded that she felt that there was still interest in developing Waverley Square and making housing a part of a project in that area. Judie stated that she hoped that a project could be developed that includes handicapped access to the T station in Waverley Square. Tomi noted that Transit X, a startup seeking to create a mass transit network in the Boston area using 1 to 5 passenger pods, could work well running along the commuter rail corridor through Belmont. Rachel suggested that it might be a good idea for the BHT and PB to collaborate on a public placemaking hearing on Waverley Square. Betsy recommended talking to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council to plan this.

Community Preservation Act (CPA) Projects. The deadline for preliminary applications for CPA grants is September 29. Gloria introduced the idea of asking for a fund to be created to allow the town to acquire property for affordable housing in a tighter timeframe than the usual annual CPA cycle. Several towns have set up something like this and we could use what they do as a guide for what we might ask for. Rachel noted that there is a very good database of CPA projects in different Massachusetts towns that could be very useful for research. Betsy volunteered to look into this further. Are there other affordable housing projects that we might consider for CPA funding? Waltham is working on a voucher program, for example. Judie noted that the conversation around the idea of buying down more affordable units at the Bradford has been discouraging. Betsy and Rachel will work on putting together a proposal to the CPA Committee for a BHT fund to purchase property. Helen agreed to help them with the application process.

Housing Production Plan (HPP) Next Steps. The final version of the HPP will be complete by the end of this week. The committee reviewed the text of a draft transmittal letter to the Board of Selectmen and made some revisions to it. The HPP and transmittal letter will be sent to the Board of Selectmen on September 5.

Metro West Update. Judie introduced the topic of the community investment tax credit program. This is a way to encourage donations to promote affordable housing. For example, the work on the HPP was funded through this program. The committee agreed that we need to promote this program, especially before the end of the year. Judie also noted that Holly Josephs has completed her internship work with Metro West Collaborative Development. At our next meeting we should write a resolution recognizing her

work.

Administrative and Future Business. Judie and Paul have agreed to staff the BHT table at Meet Belmont on August 29. Gloria reported on the TriCommunity Roundtable, which will be held on October 29 to build support for affordable housing. There will be two keynote speakers (Jesse Kanson-Benanav and Rachel Heller) and three breakout groups at this event. Discussion on electing officers for 2017-2018 was postponed until the September 19 BHT meeting. Meetings for 2017-2018 were set to the following dates (3rd Thursday except for 3rd Tuesday in September, to avoid Rosh Hashanah):

- September 19 (Tuesday)
- November 16
- December 21
- January 18
- February 15
- March 15
- April 19
- May 17
- June 21
- July 19

Submitted by Paul Rickter