

Belmont Housing Trust – Minutes for May 18, 2017 Meeting

2017 AUG -7 AM 9: 03

Present: Helen Bakeman, Judie Feins, Rachel Heller, Donald Mercier, Paul Rickter, Ann Verrilli

Absent: Liz Allison, Alisa Gardner-Todreas, Gloria Leipzig, Tommasina Olson, Judy Singler

Guests: Holly Josephs (Metro West Collaborative Development), Spencer Gober (Town staff), Julie Perkins

Minutes. The minutes of the March 16 and April 27, 2017 meetings were approved with amendments

Housing Production Plan (HPP). We reviewed the feedback from the April 27 forum on the HPP, using the points listed in the BHT minutes. In this review, the following points were raised:

- Need more statistics on percentages of single/multifamily homes in Belmont & history of percentages of residents eligible for affordable housing
- Need more information on housing for veterans
- Need more detail on steps beyond the HPP
- Are there lessons that could be learned from the Bradford (Cushing Square) development?
- Zoning reform as future strategy for affordable housing?
- Consider the ability to subdivide existing structures to create more housing units?
- Add the site on the corner of Brighton & Pleasant as underutilized?
- Exploring the potential of church/institutional sites if they become available
- Belmont Center as a potential site of housing or mixed-use
- Thinking strategically about using Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds

Next steps for HPP: approve it at the June meeting. Then bring to Board of Selectmen & Planning Board.

Planning Board. Spencer mentioned that the Planning Board was reviewing plans for the Belmont Day School project and a proposal to expand the Armenian library on Concord Ave.

Updates from the Town. Spencer reported that the Bradford project was moving forward, with a reduced number of total housing units as the number of affordable units remains unchanged. There is no occupancy yet at Royal Belmont, as the project has been slowed by minor holdups. Spencer also noted that he and Jeffrey Wheeler have been in conversation with Selectman Adam Dash on affordable housing issues that Dash would like to advocate for.

Senior Housing Issues. Donald reported on his efforts to promote eligibility for property tax deferral. No progress from talking to Will Brownsberger. Committee suggested he consult with Rep. Dave Rogers or the co-chairs of the Committee on Elder Affairs (Sens. Pat Jehlen & Barbara L'Italien). Judie described the April discussion on senior housing issues and will send out a recap after this BHT meeting.

Other Business. Rachel has set up a fair housing training to be led by Bob Terrell at the June 15 BHT meeting. Members of the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen will be invited. Further discussion about potential CPA projects, including possibly buying down more affordable units at the Bradford and possibly combining that effort with a project-based voucher. Also, we could consider asking for CPA funds to go into a BHT fund that would allow us to act quickly to acquire property in response to the market. It was also noted that a Tri-Community Coalition round table is being planned for the fall.

Trust Membership. There will likely be vacancies to fill in the BHT. We should encourage others to consider applying for appointment to the BHT.

Submitted by Paul Rickter