

## Belmont Housing Trust Minutes for January 17, 2013

**Present**—Charles Laverty III, Jonathan Jacoby, Ann Silverman, Gloria Leipzig, Judie Feins, Jay Szklut, Ann Verrilli

**Absent**—Helen Bakeman, Charles Clark, Alisa Gardner-Todreas

**Guests**—Jennifer Raitt, Steve Laferriere

**Minutes**—Minutes for the meeting of December 20, 2012, were approved as corrected.

**MetroWest Community Development**—Jenny Raitt from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) reported on her meeting with Jay Szklut and Jeffrey Wheeler of Belmont's Community Development office to review the results from the November 1 Housing Forum. They worked up a list of barriers and strategies for developing affordable housing. The Trust is invited to pick one or more strategies to focus on. The Housing Production Plan can state goals, but needs to be realistic. It's all right to focus on policy and process and not try to include goals that cannot be achieved.

A discussion of outreach possibilities followed to foster support for affordable housing in Belmont, such as contacting allies—Sustainable Belmont (Jan Kruse), Ann Paulsen, Jenny Fallon and maybe meet informally with Sustainable Belmont or talk to the Council on Aging about the needs of the senior population. Trust members were asked to consider topics to cover and points that need to be made.

There was some discussion of the Purecoat site and St. Luke's properties as potential future development opportunities. The time frame for the Plan is to submit it to the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen in March.

**Planning Board Update**—Jay announced the next public meeting of the Planning Board for January 22 at the Beech Street Center. It will include a discussion of affordable housing at Cushing Village.

**History of the Belmont Housing Trust**—The Trust was established in 1999 as a Nonprofit Housing Corporation by state statute, but in order to establish an Affordable Housing Trust Fund it may be necessary to file for federal chapter 501(C)3 status. We will pull together the files needed to do this.

**Inclusionary Zoning**—There was a discussion of the legal background for such zoning by-laws and the need to more carefully review the language of Belmont's. Further meetings and work on this are planned.

**Imler House**—Steve reported that a proposal for a two-year option to buy was presented to the Methodist Church. It is based on a 30-year mortgage with monthly payments. Although there are uncertainties due to changes at the church in the wake of their combining with the Methodist church in Watertown, a reply is expected in March. There will be still work to do on a deed restriction and common responsibilities.

Steve also said he'd talk to the diocese about any plans for St. Lukes. It was suggested we might lobby with the local parish with our ideas for the property.

**General Administration**—There was agreement to meet Wednesday, February 13, instead of the 21<sup>st</sup>. A reminder was made that the state ethics training is due to be completed by April 5, 2013.

Submitted by Jonathan Jacoby

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**Belmont HPP Preliminary Barriers/ Strategies discussion with Belmont Housing Trust**

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**Challenges and Barriers include:**

1. Address the fear of new families moving into town. The Town is discussing the need for building a new elementary school in town to accommodate existing growth. (high priority)
2. Address the significant gap between the cost of housing and the ability to purchase/ rehab homes to convert into affordable housing
3. Direct resources to assist with subdividing single-family homes to multi-family homes – zoning relief and funding
4. Engage in further neighborhood dialogue to address localized concerns (high priority)
5. Cultivate interest and synergy among and work to sustain support from town board and commission members, and staff, in housing activities, including but not limited to: (high priority)
  - Town Meeting members
  - Board of Selectmen
  - Planning Board
  - Housing Trust
  - Community Preservation Committee
  - Belmont Housing Authority
  - Town Administrator

**Housing Strategies might include:**

1. Consider opportunities for senior housing and providing the ability for seniors to age in place (high priority)
2. Housing for people with disabilities (high priority)
3. Consider redevelopment strategies that include:
  - Adaptive reuse (high priority)
  - Accessory Buildings
  - Neighborhood Conservation District
  - Infill development
  - Convert commercial only to mixed-uses
  - Small scale scattered site development
4. Adopt an Accessory Dwelling Unit Bylaw, even with minimal returns for affordable housing, this would create an important opportunity for homeowners
5. Adopt Compact Neighborhoods (location TBD)
6. Adopt 40R (location TBD) this tool helps address fears about schoolchildren and may help preserve an existing structure

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7. Consider development strategies that (high priority):
  - identify larger sites for multi-family housing
  - identify appropriate zoning strategy to accommodate multi-family housing
  - increase density along commercial corridors
  - Direct resources to assist in the reuse large existing structures (churches, municipal buildings, Pure Coat site – plating factory) (strong opportunity)
  - Focus on Small Squares
8. Implement a clear/ transparent development process
  - The current permitting process is too long (not for administrative reasons)
    - Potentially create a Design Review Board/ process and accompanying Design Guidelines to impose review time limits and create a clear division of role and responsibilities of Boards and Commissions
  - Address any permitting process issues for all boards and commissions
  - Address parking and other potential zoning barriers to dense development in neighborhoods
9. Use funding to leverage new development including CPA, HOME, and Trust funds (if any)