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Belmont Housing Trust – Minutes for November 20, 2015 Meeting

Present: Helen Bakeman, Judie Feins, Rachel Heller, Gloria Leipzig, Raffi Manjikian, Don Mercier, Ann Verrilli

Absent: Barbara Fiacco, Alisa Gardner-Todreas, Tomasina Olson

Guests: Jennifer VanCampen (MWCD), Ann Covino Goldenberg and Julie Perkins, League of Women Voters (LWV) Action Committee on Planning and Housing

Minutes. The minutes for the October 13, 2015 meeting were approved with 2 minor edits.

Update from Town. Jeffrey Wheeler was unable to attend.

MetroWest Collaborative Development. MWCD has a new AmeriCorps volunteer, Desiree Pelletier (desiree@metrowestcd.org). MWCD and the Belmont Housing Authority sponsored a charette to consider planning alternatives for Belmont Village. Five residents attended; students from the Boston Architectural College are working with the residents, obtaining other input and have done some preliminary plans. Their work continues.

Jen reported on the First-Time Homebuyer Program. MWCD conducted the second lottery and the one household that applied was selected. She requested that the Trust grant an extension of the housing search time for the 2 households who were selected in the first lottery; they are having difficulty locating housing units at an affordable and program-eligible price because housing prices in Belmont have increased since the program was designed. The Trust unanimously approved a 120-day extension of the search period for the 2 households who were selected in the first lottery.

Jen briefly described affordable housing programs being planned in Waltham and Hudson. Scattered site rental units will be acquired and rehabbed using tax credits and other funding, with the hope that future CPA funding will be available to make the housing affordable in perpetuity.

Planning Board Update. Mike Battista resigned as Chair and member of the Planning Board on November 11. Liz Allison was elected the new chair. The Planning Board is discussing what height/mass/bulk/density restrictions should be enacted for tear-down/rebuilds in Single Residency districts in Belmont.

Cushing Village—The developer has requested a one-year extension of its special permit. The sale of the Trapelo Road parking lot by the town is dependent upon the developer getting financing lined up.

Housing Production Plan update. Rachel and Gloria will work with Judie to revise the plan to emphasize that the HPP is a way to plan/control development in our town and achieve our goals, and to put the plan within a regional context. We will sponsor public fora in alliance with other groups such as the LWV to discuss the HPP and the issues it addresses.

First-Time Homebuyer Assistance Program (HAP) update. See section on MWCD.

Education and Outreach. This activity will be carried out within the context of the HPP.

Possible New Projects. Don Mercier contacted the Somerville Community Corp. about its program to compensate landlords in return for affordable deed restrictions; the project is still in its infancy and they

will provide more information early in 2016. Ann reported that Arlington tried to do a similar program but stopped it because they needed more economies of scale to make the program work.

Helen will check the CPA data base to see what other towns are currently doing with their CPA housing projects.

General Administration. The Mass Housing Partnership will hold a December 8 training workshop for housing trusts.

Submitted by Helen Bakeman