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Belmont Housing Trust Minutes for June 21, 2012

Present—Judie Feins, Helen Bakeman, Jonathan Jacoby, Alisa Gardner, Ann S. Todd, Ann 12
Silverman, Charles Clark, Charles Laverty III

Absent—Ann Verrilli, Gloria Leipzig

Guest—Tom Callahan, Roger Colton

Minutes—The minutes for May 17, 2012, were approved as corrected.

Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance (MAHA)—Tom Callahan from MAHA came to talk about his organization and its interest in Belmont due to the announced opening of a branch of East Boston Savings Bank at 70 Concord Avenue.

MAHA, based in Dorchester, was established in 1985 to promote affordable housing ownership and provide assistance for new home-buyers. Under the provisions of the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) it works with banks to foster the SoftSecond Mortgage Program.

East Boston Savings Bank, headquartered in Peabody, merged with Boston's Mt. Washington Bank in 2009 and is expanding into Allston and Belmont. MAHA would like the bank to give attention to community needs and suggests that the Housing Trust submit public comment to the appropriate agencies in support of affordable housing in Belmont for the licensing application as the CRA allows.

Tom also provided the contact information for Shelly Goehring, MAHA's Community Preservation Project Manager, in case the Trust wanted to ask for her assistance.

Discussion followed as to whether public comment was a proper action under the terms of the Trust's mission, or whether we should ask for a ruling from Town Counsel. A motion was made proposing that a carefully-crafted letter be sent, citing the Trust's mission to promote affordable housing and the Town's needs, to urge all banks in Belmont to assist with programs for those in need of such housing. The letter will be sent to East Boston Savings Bank and TD Bank North as well as to the FDIC and State Banking Commission. The motion was approved with a vote of six in favor and one abstention. Helen commented that this issue was a reminder of the need for a strategic discussion of the Trust's mission.

Metro West Collaborative Developers—Ann S. reported that the Imler House project was on hold, pending the church's plans to merge with a Watertown church and the summer hiatus in operations.

Alisa reported that the MWCD and Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) have set out a time-table for the Housing Production Plan and are asking for help over the coming several months with the hope of following the Plan with an implementation grant. They are asking for outreach assistance for input from Town sources. It was suggested they look at the survey done for the Comprehensive Plan three years ago and then let the Trust know what other information they might need. The goal is to conduct community meetings and present the findings in October.

Planning Board—Chuck C. discussed various pending developments. Cushing Village is moving forward positively; the next Planning Board meeting is June 26. TD Bank North is planning to build on the Video Store site on Trapelo Road. The King parcel in Waverley is still in play. A developer is working on plans for the Waverley UCC church property but has not submitted anything to the PB; the Trust may want to contact him. Chuck also stressed that the PB has not yet requested any staff work or comments on the language for the inclusionary zoning regulations.

Inclusionary Zoning Enforcement—Roger Colton presented information on two recent Belmont developments. Due to the possibility that a discussion of strategy in respect to potential litigation might result in an adverse effect on the position of the Housing Trust, it was moved, seconded and unanimously approved at 8:59 PM to move the meeting into executive session with the intention of reconvening as a public body. Those voting in favor were Judie Feins, Helen Bakeman, Jonathan Jacoby, Alisa Gardner-Todreas, Ann Silverman, Charles Clark and Charles Laverty.

At 9:34 PM it was moved, seconded and approved to reconvene in public session. Voting in favor were Judie Feins, Helen Bakeman, Jonathan Jacoby, Alisa Gardner-Todreas, Ann Silverman, Charles Clark and Charles Laverty.

General Administration—The next meeting on July 19 will be the Trust's Annual Meeting with election of officers and setting of the 2012-2013 calendar.

The Community Preservation Act Committee plans to complete a list of its recommendations in the fall. These will go to Town Meeting in April.

Submitted by Jonathan Jacoby