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BELMONT HOUSING AUTHORITY

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Special Meeting

Sherman Gardens Community Room

September 19, 2019 PM 2:51

Meeting was called to order by Chair Brescia at 6:00 P.M.

1. Attendance: The attendance was taken. Commissioners Donna Brescia, Charles R. Lavery, III, Gloria Leipzig, Anne Mahon and Cassandra Page were present. Also present was Jaclyn Martin, Executive Director, Leonardi Aray, Eliza Datta (participated by phone), and housing authority residents/members of the public.
2. Sherman Gardens Redevelopment. Presentation by Consultants Leonardi Aray Architects and E3 Development LLC.

Leonardi Aray introduced himself and Eliza Datta.

Commissioner Leipzig reviewed with residents the grant that funded to hire Leonardi and Eliza. Based on the real need of the property for accessibility and for additional housing. Beginning of process. Long way to go and BHA will continue to come back to residents for suggestions and support. Mr. Aray added that they were not hired as architect for actual redevelopment, just the due diligence to see what the possibilities are, for example the underlying zoning would not work for today's standard.

Ms. Datta added her background in redeveloping public housing, and how she is looking at what is possible for existing purpose, demand, what rent might look like, redevelopment options going forward, demands in Belmont types of housing, including family housing, how redevelopment might be financed. She also noted that any redevelopment scenario, we would still have eighty units of deeply affordable housing for residents.

Commissioner Leipzig also reassured residents that at the bare minimum, the 80 units would be maintained.

Mr. Aray reviewed the opportunities and challenges, including support and recognition of need to improve accessibility and improve maintenance function. Ms. Datta noted that every option keeps assumption of the 80 units of deeply affordable units. The challenges discussed include zoning, community reaction, and relocation challenges, as well as securing funds. The funding would be from many sources. Mr. Aray also reviewed existing conditions, including the current 27 spots and unpaved brown street and will look at parking options.

**Consultants reviewed three types of potential renovations – Light Rehab, Substantial Rehab, and New Construction.**

**“Rehab Light.”** Smaller, more modest interventions. Possibly a way to introduce redevelopment. Would include modifying end units to be fully accessible, including ramps and kitchen/bathroom renovations to accommodate mobility devices. Does not address smaller unit sizes, does not add additional units, and parking lot stays the same. Cost per unit is similar to redevelopment and displaces residents. The anticipated cost could be between \$3 Million to \$6 million. Cost is very dependent on design and accessibility be addressed.

**“Substantial Rehab.”** Addresses accessibility by installing an elevator in each building, which is complicated and costly, and would require substantial modification to current electrical, plumbing, as well as to units, including creating a hallway upstairs that goes the length of the hallway. Maintain the 80 units, and units would be larger and may be able to add a few additional units. Not sure about the capacity to add a third floor, would need require further evaluation of building structure. Complexity of adding 3<sup>rd</sup> floor might be cost prohibitive because property is state owned, and we must pay prevailing wage as set by the state. The anticipated cost of ‘Substantial Rehab’ could be between \$20 Million to \$22 million. (approx. 250,000 to \$275,000 per unit.)

**“New construction”.** Multiple ways to design new construction on the parcel. The markup Mr. Aray and Ms. Datta ran reflect 120 units and 42 parking spots possible. This would create an additional 40 additional housing units and 15 additional parking spots. The units would be larger, would be able to add in some two-bedroom units, as well as the community room, BHA office, and other social benefits for aging in place and continuity. The anticipated cost to replace with new single elevator, three to four stories high, could be between \$32 Million to \$36 Million. (approximately \$400,000/unit, no economies of scale).

*Relocation.* Commissioner Leipzig, Commissioner Mahon and Executive Director reviewed with residents that there are lots of options for tenant relocation during redevelopment and that realistically, a project like this is still five to ten years away. Strategies the housing authority can take as it gets closer include not filling vacancies as they come up, issuing vouchers to residents to find housing within the community here in Belmont or closer to family in another town, build another building (at Sherman gardens or another site) and permanently or temporarily house then existing Sherman gardens residents during construction.

*New Units Possible.* Mr. Aray and Ms. Datta reviewed with the board that DHCD is very interested at funding new housing, and they are running pilot programs looking at redevelopment. The goal is to add new units of housing as well as work force type housing. These elements are critical to securing the resources.

*Another BHA site?* Mr. Aray and Ms. Datta looked to see where else the eighty units could be built, in order to create a ‘fresh canvas’. Building a new building elsewhere first creates opportunity to restart and do something different at Sherman Gardens such as town homes, it also significantly helps with relocation during construction. Beyond the scope of their contract and would need an environmental study and review of zoning bylaws, but the consultants did identify that looking at google measurements, they believe it could be feasible to build at least eighty units in the Belmont Village parking lot and would be able to incorporate the BHA main office. In addition to proper review of redevelopment at Belmont Village, such questions as parking would need to be addressed.

*Issues to still explore.* Cost and cost ranges, zoning strategy, core and density, parking, funding sources, relocation strategy, and role of BHA in redevelopment. Redevelopment pilot projects happening now, and DHCD is looking for agencies to have a development partner. Preliminary analysis of what resources might be. There are tools available to help pay for cost, and the higher tools make it work. Residents and Housing Authority to raise support of redevelopment.

Executive Director also noted that the Housing Authority is starting the process of applying for Community Preservation grant, much like the current one, to look at redevelopment potential of Belmont Village.


3. Adjournment.

A motion was made at 7:17 P.M. by Commissioner Leipzig,  
Seconded by Commissioner Laverty, to adjourn the regular meeting.

Vote: Unanimous. (5)

Motion declared passed.

A True Copy

  
Jaclyn M. Martin, Executive Director