

Belmont Housing Trust – Minutes for December 17, 2015 Meeting

Present: Helen Bakeman, Judie Feins, Rachel Heller, Gloria Leipzig, Don Mercier, Tomasina Olson
Absent: Barbara Fiacco, Alisa Gardner-Todreas, Raffi Manjikian, Ann Verrilli
Guests: Jennifer VanCampen (MWCD), Desiree Pelletier (MWCD AmeriCorps intern), Ann Covino Goldenberg and Julie Perkins, League of Women Voters (LWV) Action Committee on Planning and Housing

2016 JAN 26 AM 9:10

Minutes. The minutes for the November 20 meeting were approved.

Update from Town. Jeffrey Wheeler was unable to attend.

MetroWest Collaborative Development. Jen introduced the new MWCD AmeriCorps intern, Desiree Pelletier (desiree@metrowestcd.org). Her primary responsibility will be volunteer recruitment/community outreach.

Jen reported on the First-Time Homebuyer Program. Jen stated that one of the one-bedroom lottery winners intends to drop out of the program because of difficulty locating a housing unit at an affordable and program-eligible price. The Trust discussed options for making the program work, given the increase in Belmont housing prices since the program was designed. If we make substantive changes to the program, it is likely to necessitate approvals by the CPC and perhaps Town Meeting.

MWCD and the Belmont Housing Authority continue to meet with students from the Boston Architectural College who are working have developed 3 preliminary options for redevelopment of Belmont Village. DHCD recently had a bidders conference to discuss the availability of approximately \$1 million in planning grants for “serious grand schemes” for market rate housing projects in hot markets. MWCD will meet with the Belmont Housing Authority to discuss whether they should submit a grant application for this.

Jen briefly described affordable housing programs being planned in Waltham and Hudson, wherein MWCD would purchase 2-3 unit rental buildings. The towns would allocate CPA funds for needed rehab and to make the buildings deed-restricted affordable.

Planning Board Update. No representatives from the Planning Board were in attendance

Housing Production Plan update. A group of Belmont citizens, led by Bonnie Friedman and David Merfield, met to establish the Belmont Fund as a component of the Community Investment Tax Credit allocation to MWCD. They hope to raise donations of \$15,000 by year’s end. (MWCD still has \$75,000 in tax credits left.) Belmont Fund contributions would be used to finalize the HPP and organize public fora and other outreach to get community input and support for the HPP and other affordable housing initiatives.

General Administration. At our next meeting, Helen will report on the relevant CPA projects currently being done by other Massachusetts towns with their CPA housing projects. Gloria indicated that the local Coalition to End Homelessness is planning a forum this spring on affordable housing.

Submitted by Helen Bakeman