

Belmont Housing Trust Minutes for 3/19/09

In Attendance—Judie Feins, Jonathan Jacoby, Nancy Marsh, Ann Silverman, Ann Verrilli

CPA Discussion—Judie asked for thoughts about how to proceed with the effort to adopt the provisions of the Community Preservation Act for Belmont. She did not think that the board could continue to take the lead as the Belmont Housing Trust. Ann S. brought up the recent initiative of the Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) to provide funding for affordable housing outreach. She thought the Trust might apply for funding for a campaign to adopt CPA, but that it would require making a strong case for affordable housing being a priority for CPA funds. The other constituencies in town—open space, historic preservation and recreation—would have to agree to this approach. It was decided to put the idea to the larger group at the planned CPA meeting as well as asking if there is support for forming a task force to direct a campaign for CPA.

Minutes—The minutes for the meeting of 2/24/09 were approved as corrected.

Five-Town Consortium—Ann S. reported on the March 5 meeting. Five hypothetical collaborative structures were presented for discussion. The two that received the most interest were a collaboration embedded in Watertown Community Housing (WCH) or the Waltham Alliance to Create Housing (WATCH) or a new organization controlled by the five groups which would work only in the five communities. It was reported that the funders solicited for input thought the proposals good, but that there was no money available. There was a suggestion that the Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership (MBHP) might be willing to spin off some support. Lousie Elving, the consultant from VIVA, is looking into it.

Ann had presented the idea of expanding the consortium to include towns such as Arlington and Medford, but there was little response from the others. Her sense is that Lincoln and Lexington are not as interested in production. She also said that some of the participants had attended the meeting on February 26 called by State Representative Will Brownsberger and they seemed to think that Belmont supported the legislation written by the Municipal Coalition for Affordable Housing (MCAFAH) which is largely designed to weaken 40B legislation.

Inclusionary Zoning—It was reported that Carla Moynahan is going to meet with the Board of Selectmen Chair, Angelo Firenze, to explain the recommended rules and regulations and argue for their approval.

Welcoming Communities—Judie called attention to the forum sponsored by the Commonwealth Housing Task Force to discuss strategies that will help to create a welcoming environment for people of color, people with disabilities, low-income

people and other groups. It is scheduled for Thursday, April 30, in Boston. Judie may be able to attend

Waverley Woods—Two events were discussed: A potluck in mid-April for the Waverley Woods residents, using the Waverley Oaks community room. And a ribbon-cutting celebration at the end of April or in May. Nancy reported on several issues

- Tara Mizrahi, Project Manager for Affordable Investments, is working on matters of road maintenance and signage.
- Signage for the buildings is going to be improved to help taxis, deliveries, visitors, etc.
- Snow removal from the walkways and stairs is proving to be a challenge.
- The Belmont Fire Department has visited to familiarize their personnel with the site.
- The playground is getting a lot of use and there are several dogs in residence,

Oakley Neighborhood 40R—There are still no satisfactory answers to Ann's questions about financing and affordability. She thinks the Oakley Neighborhood Association's positions on the project are not greatly different from the Trust's in most respects. She still would like the Trust to meet with the developer.

Housing Production Plan—It was agreed that updating this plan for the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) would be beneficial in focusing attention on building affordable housing stock. It used to be prepared by Belmont's Community Development office and could be done in conjunction with the comprehensive planning process.

CPA Discussion—Only one person (Allan Vanderlely from the Historic District Commission) arrived for the planned discussion on adopting CPA for Belmont. There was a short conversation about possibly bringing in speakers from communities who have adopted CPA to talk about their experiences. Judie reported that the League of Women Voters is in the process of deciding whether to take a position on CPA. In light of the low turn-out we are not ready to move forward and will not apply for the CHAPA grant described above.

Submitted by Jonathan Jacoby