

Affordable Housing Trust
October 5, 2023
Meeting held via Zoom videoconference

Roll Call

Present were:

Victoria Petracca, Chair
Frank Streeter, Secretary
Jason Allison
Carolyn Read (late)
Debra Williams (absent)
Kelly Dolan, ex officio



Brian Keating, Director of Community Development and Planning

Chair Petracca called the Affordable Housing Trust's meeting to order over Zoom at 7:04 PM and called the roll of the Trustees.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

After reviewing the minutes from the Trust's September 7, 2023 meeting,

Trustee Allison moved to accept the minutes; Chair Petracca seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a 3-0 vote.

Scheduled Appearances

Danielle Fahey, who is the Executive Director of Lancaster's Bigelow Gardens and the Executive Director of the Clinton Housing Authority, was scheduled to appear, but this has been postponed until the Trust's December meeting. Chair Petracca read an email from a resident with their ideas on how to expand Bigelow Gardens. Chair Petracca reported on the site's constraints that regrettably prohibit any expansion.[Trustee Read arrives]

Housing Production Plan

Chair Petracca updated the Board on the creation process for the Town's new Housing Production Plan (HPP) and was pleased to note that the Town just received a grant for \$46,600 to pay for updating the existing plan. The Town now needs to issue a RFP for a consultant to do this. The Board discussed how to review Town Administrator Kate Hodges' draft RFP. Chair Petracca screen shared the draft and the Board commented on it. Brian Keating, the Town of Lancaster's new Director of Community Development and Planning, discussed the schedule for posting and responding to the RFP. Responses will be due in late November. The Board reviewed this draft further and Director Keating advised on both the process and the language of the draft. Chair Petracca, Secretary Streeter and Director Keating will review the draft and forward it to Town Administrator Hodges with any recommended changes.

Trustee Allison moved to approve this plan; Secretary Streeter seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a 4-0 vote.

Updates to Lancaster's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI)

Chair Petracca announced that the 40R zone in North Lancaster that the Board had spent so much time working on had finally been approved by the Attorney General's office. She noted that Capital Group, the developer of that part of North Lancaster, is involved in an approval process with MEPA that is estimated to take 9 to 12 months.

Cottage Lane rentals 40B

MCO is making progress on finishing the construction of their Cottage Lane rental project off Deershorn Road. Final approval for the project by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) is expected in October. Once this approval has been received, the project can be submitted to the state to add all 32 rental units onto the Town's SHI. Lancaster resident Martha Moore of 131 Center Bridge Rd. asked about stormwater issues pertaining to that project. Chair Petracca referred her to the planning office for follow up as that is really an issue for the Town's Conservation Agent to address.

Neck Farm Estates 40B

The Neck Farm Estate 40B project at 13 Neck Rd. is expected to file a comprehensive permit application with the Zoning Board of Appeals by the end of October. Their 40B project has received its preliminary approval from the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC).

Harbor Homes/2038 Lunenburg Rd.

Harbor Homes would like to resume work on their project, which is currently under a cease and desist order due to past stormwater management issues. Secretary Streeter gave the Board an update from the Planning Board on the status of the project. Chair Petracca reminded the Board that this is development was permitted under IPOD regulations, which unfortunately do not require the inclusion of any affordable units. The two affordable units were negotiated because IPOD's require a Special Permit from Planning Board and the Town's new Inclusionary Zoning had not yet been approved.

197 Main St. (previously 213-219 South Main St.)

197 Main St. is a local action unit (LAU) project. It has been approved by the Town and the State, and at present the developer is reviewing the project's Regulatory Agreement. The developer needs to return the signed Regulatory Agreement in order to record the affordable unit deed restriction at the Worcester Registry of Deeds so it can be added to the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI).

DCAMM project

The Board reviewed the draft of its letter to Town Administrator Hodges and the Select Board with its comments about the redevelopment of the DCAMM site on Old Common Road. In its letter the Board strongly advocates for "deeply affordable housing" which

means housing at under 30% of the area median income (AMI). After a further discussion,

Secretary Streeter moved to approve the text of the letter; Trustee Allison seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a 4-0 vote.

Chair Petracca explained why the 30% level was particularly important. She will present the letter to the Select Board as a public comment at an upcoming Select Board meeting.

Town Administrator Hodges will make a presentation about the DCAMM project to the Board at its November 2 meeting. The Board intends to dig deeply into the housing component and the various options being considered for the site.

Public Comment

Lancaster resident Sam Malatos of 24 Neck Road asked about ZBA deadlines for hearings and public notice requirements. Director Keating clarified the schedule for the 40B approval process.

Lancaster resident Martha Moore of 131 Center Bridge Rd. asked if there was a MEPA review trigger for the 13 Neck Rd. project. Chair Petracca said she did not think there was one. Director Keating commented on the State's regulations and how they relate to the project. He also described the regulatory process. Chair Petracca advised Ms. Moore to speak to the Town's Conservation Agent about this issue. Ms. Moore asked Director Keating about historic restrictions on the property due to zoning. Chair Petracca and Director Keating reviewed the MEPA application procedure.

Communications

None

The next regularly scheduled meetings of the Affordable Housing Trust will be held on Thursday, November 2, 2023 and on Thursday, December 7, 2023, both at 7 P.M. via Zoom.

Adjournment

There being no further business to consider,

Trustee Allison moved to adjourn the meeting; Trustee Read seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a 4-0 vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:19 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Frank S. Streeter, Secretary