



Affordable Housing Trust
November 2, 2023
Meeting held via Zoom videoconference

Roll Call

Present were:

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

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 October 5, 2023 meeting,

Trustee Allison moved to accept the minutes; Trustee Read seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a 4-0-1 vote with Trustee Williams abstaining as she was not in attendance at the meeting.

Scheduled Appearances

Lancaster Town Administrator Kate Hodges, who gave a presentation to the Board about development options for the DCAMM site on Old Common Road. She noted that the Town received a grant for \$32,000 for a phase 1 environmental survey and planning work. BSC, an engineering firm often used by the Town, did an engineering review of the site in relation to its development possibilities. Administrator Hodges stated that the engineering review was focused on housing and open space with some mixed-use development options. She showed a map of the entire DCAMM site and its surrounding land, and pointed out 15 acres across Route 110 from the site that would be saved for a potential well. The Town has been interested in this site for quite some time.

Administrator Hodges also noted that there was a brownfields section of the site along Route 110 and the Town would prefer to have DCAMM keep responsibility for this part of the site until it is legally fully cleaned up or receives an official determination that no further action is required.

Administrator Hodges presented three different potential options for the site: low, medium, and mixed use, all with increasingly higher density. The low density concept (Option #1) assumes that the site would be cleared and all the buildings presently on the site would be removed. That concept plan includes 76 residential units, largely in clustered townhouses, and residential amenities. The medium density concept (Option #2) includes some adaptive reuse of the existing buildings on the site. Unfortunately, only

three of the existing buildings are usable for any form of renovation as most of them have decayed enough to require demolition. However, there are significant historic restrictions on the site that would have to be addressed before any buildings could be demolished or restored. The three buildings that are still in good enough shape to renovate are the old chapel, which is shown as #4 on the site map, the old school, which is #8, and the Campbell building that is presently housing the DCAMM offices, which is #16. The mixed use concept (Option #3) would feature some lower density housing with single-family houses along Old Common Road. Only building #16, the Campbell building, would be saved/renovated and ideally repurposed for senior housing.

Concept #1 includes 100 townhouse units and 180 parking spaces. Among the townhouses there would be 17 at 1500 ft.² and another 12 at 2250 ft.². Concept #2 has a row of single-family houses along Old Common Road, which is consistent with the existing neighborhood. This concept would have townhouses screened from the road and would have 16 units of senior housing in building #16. Concept #3 shows some commercial uses in addition to residences. It contains a total of 168 rental units while still retaining the single-family housing on Old Common Road. This option would also reuse the three buildings mentioned above, but it would have more of a green buffer screening the rest of the site. This option would have the 16 units of senior housing in building #16 and another new building containing an additional 10 units of senior housing. There would be less recreational space under this option than the other two. In addition there would be a three-story apartment building located well away from Old Common Road that would contain 110 rental units. Administrator Hodges stressed that these are all just discussion images and plans to be used on the RFP for the project, and not construction drawings.

At the conclusion of the presentation Chair Petracca thanked Administrator Hodges for her excellent work. The engineer for this part of the process was BSC, who the Town works with on a regular basis, and all of the costs of their work were paid by grant funds. Chair Petracca asked about the process of gathering public input for the RFP. Administrator Hodges explained her process of assembling the various past concepts that have been proposed for the site and working with both Mass Development and BSC to generate these new concepts based on that input. The basic ideas included homes, some programmed recreational uses, and some commercial space. The commercial space does not include plans for any big box stores or commercial uses that would be disruptive to the neighborhood.

Chair Petracca advocated for the creation of deeply affordable housing, which is housing at the 30% AMI level and not the 60% or 80% of AMI that is much more common. She noted that the creation of deeply affordable housing usually requires a municipal contribution of some sort to be successful. Administrator Hodges noted that two of the buildings on the site will be owned by the Town, so the Town could use that space to promote and create some very affordable housing units. Chair Petracca noted the Town's need for increased senior housing and units able to accommodate the disabled at this 30% AMI level.

Chair Petracca asked about the Commonwealth's new MBTA zoning requirements and if the DCAMM site could be used to satisfy that requirement if the Town's existing 40R zone off of McGovern Blvd. is not sufficient. Chair Petracca recommended that the DCAMM site be rezoned under 40R to provide for a very specific development plan for the site. Of the above three concepts, apparently concept #2 just meets the MBTA zoning regulations, concept #3 would easily comply, and concept #1 would not meet the new MBTA zoning requirements.

Administrator Hodges stressed again that all of the concepts she had just presented were just that – concepts – and not final in any way, just to facilitate discussion of the various potential outcomes for the site. Trustee Williams asked about the process for community input on this process and how to get detailed information out to the public to inform these discussions. Administrator Hodges noted that owning the site would not be free to the Town as it has carrying cost of about \$100,000 a year. Trustee Read also complemented the presentation and concepts presented. She likes concepts #2 and #3 for their maximization of housing on the site.

Secretary Streeter also complemented Administrator Hodges on her presentation, and noted the significant leadtime needed for any rezoning of the site. He recommended 40R zoning. Administrator Hodges agreed with his assessment of the possible length of the process, but also noted that it will cost taxpayers \$100,000 a year while the Town waits for any needed rezoning. Chair Petracca asked for public involvement in the rezoning process, especially if a 40R zone is chosen. Administrator Hodges said the Select Board will be reviewing these concepts at its November 6 meeting and will be continuing the process. Trustee Allison, who is the Select Board's representative on the Trust, discussed the process for gathering public input with Administrator Hodges. He said he will comment on this issue at the Select Board meeting and for now will just be a respectful listener. Community Development and Planning Director Brian Keating commented on the upcoming process and stated that this information gathering will sync well with the Town's creation of its new master plan.

Lancaster resident Jay Moody of 144 Seven Bridge Rd. asked about the possibility of having market rate housing on the site limited to residents of over 55 years of age. Administrator Hodges said that that was certainly possible, but is not required. Administrator Hodges certainly favors additional senior housing if possible, and is also in favor of additional units to accommodate the disabled as previously discussed.

Linda Johnson of 169 Old Common Rd. pointed out that the neighbors on Old Common Road have not been consulted about the project since 2019 when an architectural design competition used the site. She is concerned about traffic on Old Common Road as well as maintenance of the project once it is completed. She noted there will be more questions from neighbors who want to hear their comments heard.

Administrator Hodges noted that the Town has a July deadline to decide on its plans for the site. She also reminded the Board that the site is the subject of a number of historical restrictions that are held by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). All three

of the buildings that might be renovated are on the Historic Register. Secretary Streeter stated that there are reportedly a number of graves on site and that MHC may well require an archaeological survey to map them before any construction can proceed. Administrator Hodges said she was aware of this fact and that DCAMM has some documentation about the graves' location. To conclude, Chair Petracca summarized the Trust's concerns about the project.

Housing Production Plan

Chair Petracca said that the RFP for updating the Town's Housing Production Plan has been published in the central register with a response deadline of late November. Planning Director Keating noted the requirement for a certified plan, which does not come until after formal approval of the plan and will lead to safe harbor status for the Town.

Updates to Lancaster's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI)

North Lancaster 40R

Chair Petracca said that Capital Group, the developer of that part of North Lancaster, is filing a supplemental DIR with MEPA in December.

Cottage Lane rentals 40B

MCO is finishing construction of their Cottage Lane rental project off Deershorn Road. Permanent financing has been issued for the project, which is a necessary step for final approval before the 32 units can be added to the Town's SHI.

Neck Farm Estates 40B

The Neck Farm Estate 40B project at 13 Neck Rd. has submitted a comprehensive permit application to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Director Keating discussed the hearing schedule and next steps. Lancaster resident Sam Malatos of 24 Neck Road asked if there had been any design changes to the project, but apparently there have not been.

Harbor Homes/2038 Lunenburg Rd.

The Board expressed concern about the tax liens that the Town had just placed on the property. Director Keating and Secretary Streeter discussed the status of the existing cease and desist order on the project.

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

No updates since the Trust's previous meeting.

New Business

Chair Petracca brought up the proposed subdivision of 130 acres of land on Hilltop Drive (aka Hawthorne Hill) into 18 lots. She noted that number of lots would require two affordable units, which she suspected would be substituted for by payments in lieu to the Trust rather than making two of the single-family homes to be built into affordable units.

Trustee Read asked about the status of the Memorial School Reuse Committee (MSRC) and if she is still the Trust's appointee to that committee. Trustee Allison will bring this

up to the Select Board. Chair Petracca requested that the Trust no longer have a seat on the MSRC given that there is no longer any affordable housing component to the project.

Communications

None

The next regularly scheduled meetings of the Affordable Housing Trust will be held on Thursday, December 7, 2023 and on Thursday, January 4, 2024, both at 7 P.M. via Zoom.

Adjournment

There being no further business to consider,

Secretary Streeter moved to adjourn the meeting; Trustee Williams seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Frank S. Streeter, Secretary