

Affordable Housing Trust
March 3, 2022
Meeting held via Zoom videoconference

Roll Call

Present were:

Victoria Petracca, Chair
Frank Streeter, Secretary
Jay Moody
Carolyn Read
Debra Williams

Chair Victoria Petracca called the Affordable Housing Trust's (AHT) meeting to order over Zoom at 7:03 PM and called the roll of the Trustees.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

After a brief discussion,

Trustee Read moved to accept the minutes of the Trust's January 6, 2022 and January 20, 2022 meetings; Trustee Williams seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

Updates to Lancaster's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI)

Trustee Read updated the Board on the status of 32 Carter Street. Apparently the current owners now wish to sell. If the closing of the sale is likely to be more than six months away then Trustee Read will try to get the owners to sign the updated deed restriction now, but otherwise it can be done at the closing. The property is presently deed restricted but DHCD's deed restriction language has been updated since those restrictions were put in place, thus the need for the new version. Trustee Read explained the marketing plan for the unit including the fact that DHCD must approve any buyer.

Chair Petracca briefed the Board on the Harbor Homes project now being built at 2038 Lunenburg Road. There has been no progress on actual construction since last meeting.

Scheduled Appearances

None

Continued Discussion of 40R Zoning in North Lancaster

Chair Petracca updated the Board on density options for the 40R zone, especially in relation to the guidelines for the Commonwealth's new MBTA zoning requirements. She noted that the Planning Board has decided to take the lead on responding to the MBTA zoning requirements. Chair Petracca asked for comments about the new requirements. Trustee Read said she was in favor of the new requirements and expressed a preference for the MBTA zones, which have a 5-acre minimum size, to be distributed around Lancaster and not all concentrated in a specific spot. Trustee Moody asked if the 40R

could be modified to accommodate the MBTA requirements at a later date and Chair Petracca said it could be.

Chair Petracca reviewed the revised parcel map for the 40R zone and the Board discussed options for the maximum number of units that could possibly be built in the zone and what a desirable number might be. The Board discussed the impact of open space and wetlands and how much they might lower DHCD's projected unit count. The Board also discussed which parcels to exclude to lower the total capacity. Secretary Streeter stressed the need to educate the public about the need for future capacity.

Secretary Streeter proposed keeping the lots with the Dunkin Donuts and the Mobil gas station in the zone as they were already fully built out and so not likely to add residential units but would increase the total size of the zone, which might be helpful with future MBTA compliance issues. Trustee Moody agreed. Chair Petracca then reviewed the parcel ownership map and the number of possible units on each.

Secretary Streeter proposed cutting the size of the zone back to just the Capital Group land south of McGovern Blvd. and the Mobil station, which is also on the south side of McGovern Blvd., and to limit the total number of units to be constructed in that zone through the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) expected to be executed between Capital Group and the Town/Trust. Chair Petracca pointed out that such a restriction on the number of housing units in the zone may not be approved by DHCD. Lancaster resident Dick Trussell advocated for not making the zone too small to ensure adequate space for new businesses, which the Town wishes to encourage for tax revenue.

The Board then went through the map parcel by parcel. The Board discussed removing the soccer fields from the proposed zone, which would reduce the capacity of the zone by a potential 377 units. The Board then discussed the lots north of McGovern Blvd. and the commercial parcels along Route 70. There was a general consensus to remove the soccer fields but to keep all of the land south of McGovern Blvd. in the zone. Lot 14-8.A will be preserved as open space, which will be reflected in the MOA.

Lancaster resident Greg Jackson (40 Farnsworth Way) commented about parcel 14-4.M. He noted that most of that lot is within the 100' buffer zone and so would be unbuildable. He felt including it in the district would be misleading. Chair Petracca pointed out that DHCD is comfortable with the current wetlands delineation and does not require an on the ground delineation. The 40R zone will not override the Conservation Commission's authority and, while a survey is not necessary to approve the district, it would be needed before the start of construction. Jackson stated that the wetlands in question are over half an acre and so should be listed as the current maps "are misleading people". Chair Petracca again noted that the current maps adhere to DHCD guidelines. Secretary Streeter thanked Jackson for his on the ground knowledge of the site but stressed that following DHCD regulations is not misleading people.

Trustee Moody moved to redefine the borders of the proposed 40R district by excluding the soccer fields, the commercial lots presently containing the

Mobil station and the Dunkin Donuts, and the presently vacant lot along Route 70 north of the Dunkin Donuts; Trustee Read seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

The Board then discussed the density requirements for 2 and 3 family housing in the 40R zone. Right now the density is set at up to 15 units per acre to meet the Commonwealth's new MBTA zoning requirements. The Board discussed dropping it back to the original 12 units/acre the Board had initially recommended in consultation with DHCD. Planning Board Chair Russ Williston stated that the 40R zone's 25 units per acre density for multifamily housing should meet the MBTA requirements. Secretary Streeter observed that the reduction in density would only affect 2 and 3 family housing, and not the multifamily housing that is expected to comprise most of the district. Trustee Moody asked if there would be any downside of reducing the density to 12 units/acre. It was the sense of the Board that there would be no downside and the density was not adjusted.

Chair Petracca reviewed the latest draft of the MOA with Capital Group covering the 40R district. Secretary Streeter and Trustee Read flagged some comments. Trustee Read noted that any local preference regulations must be applied by the Town and cannot be put into the MOA. Section 7 of the MOA still needs to be redone and sections 5 and 6 are still blank. There are a number of restrictions on various types of restaurants in the draft MOA that were copied from the Maynard MOA, but the sense of the Board was that they should all be cut from the final agreement. Chair Petracca will forward this latest draft with comments to Town Counsel for their comments.

The Board then discussed trail connectivity and the 40R zone. Secretary Streeter pointed out that, while they were close, none of the existing trails connect with the proposed 40R zone as presently configured. Both Chair Petracca and Trustee Moody noted that the trail system could be expanded to make such connections. Chair Petracca pointed out that the Lancaster Land Trust had just gotten a grant to improve the parking lot at the Cook Conservation Area to facilitate trail access. Secretary Streeter said that the process would be facilitated by a better trail map, but Chair Petracca observed that the Town has no Open Space Committee to do it. Secretary Streeter said he was in favor of trail connectivity but that the issue should be postponed until the Board could get better maps.

Chair Petracca reviewed potential riparian buffer restoration efforts along McGovern Brook. Agenda items 5 and 6 were tabled until the Trust's next meeting.

Public Comment

Lancaster resident Anne Ogilvie, 4 Turner Lane, asked if she could read a letter to the Board, but Chair Petracca pointed out that the matter that was the subject of her letter had already been tabled. Secretary Streeter suggested she wait until the following meeting. He also gave a general warning noting that things have crossed his desk recently that were libelous and cautioned those in attendance to govern themselves accordingly. Ogilvie asked if that comment was directed at her and Secretary Streeter assured her it wasn't. Ogilvie then read her letter, which Chair Petracca acknowledged.

Lancaster resident Greg Jackson (40 Farnsworth Way) asked the Board to consider his written comments and again objected to what he felt were editorial comments in the minutes.

New Business

None

Communications

The next two scheduled Affordable Housing Trust Meetings will be held on Thursday, March 17, 2022 at 7 P.M. via Zoom, and on Wednesday, April 6, 2022 at 7 P.M. via Zoom, a day earlier than usual to accommodate Capital Group's presentation on the 7th.

Adjournment

There being no further business to consider,

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:37 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Frank S. Streeter, Secretary