



DANVERS AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

TOWN HALL, DANVERS, MASSACHUSETTS 01923
TELEPHONE (978) 777-0001 FAX (978) 762-0215

Minutes March 3, 2014

Attending: Gardner Trask, John Alden, Donald Gates, Tish Lentine and Carla King

Staff: Susan Fletcher and Francine Butler

Planning Discussion for March 24, 2014 Informational Meeting About the Town's Draft Housing Production Plan

Trask told the Board that they were here to discuss the Town's draft housing production plan that would be presented at the meeting on March 24, 2014 at the Senior Center.

Fletcher asked for everyone's comments on the flyer, because she would like it to go out within the next day or two. The Board offered some recommendations to amend the flyer.

Trask recommended sending the flyer to members of the Housing Authority. Alden asked if it would be sent to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Fletcher went over the various boards and committees that would be forwarded this information. Trask recommended putting a draft on the website.

King told Fletcher to e-mail the flyer to her, and she would take care of forwarding same to the Danvers Housing Authority.

Fletcher told the Board that Sweet informed her that her presentation would take about thirty minutes, and she would then take questions.

Trask said other than welcoming remarks by the Board, and maybe two minutes to describe what the Trust is and does, he would make introductions and then turn the meeting over to Sweet.

Fletcher asked the Board if there was anything in the PowerPoint presentation that they wanted to change.

Trask wanted emphasis that Danvers has been an embracing community to affordable housing, and that the mission to provide a variety of affordable housing opportunities within the community will not end when we reach the ten percent threshold. The

Housing Production Plan will provide a plan so that we are able to continue to grow our affordable housing stock.

Alden asked if they needed the approval of the Selectmen and Planning Board. Fletcher stated that the plan does need to be endorsed by the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board and that this would take place after the informational meeting on the March 24th.

Trask stated that the Wayne Marquis said it was on the Selectmen's agenda for the meeting on April 15th. He asked if they needed to go before the Planning Board. Fletcher stated that she would speak with Kate Day to see if the Planning Board is amendable to attending the Selectmen's meeting. Trask said that he would inform the Selectmen of the meeting on the March 24th.

Trask felt the Selectmen might ask what the SHI numbers are presently, as well as what is in the pipeline. Alden stated that those numbers are in the Housing Production Plan.

Fletcher stated that right now we are at 9.15%. The developments at 24 Cherry Street, Conifer Commons, 356 Andover Street and 26 Mill Street will be added to our SHI when certified by DHCD. She is not sure where these projects are in the LIP process.

Gates asked when they are expected to be on the SHI list, and it was confirmed by the end of the year.

Trask said that they also had the developments at 55 Coolidge, Holten Street and Venice Street in the pipeline.

Trask stated that the PowerPoint presentation had a slide on income and a slide on rent. He asked if they were going to get a slide on purchase. Fletcher said she would ask Sweet about an ownership slide. Trask felt that someone would look at the rent slide and think that it was very high rent.

Lentine asked what the word amnesty meant on Page 6 under Implementation Strategies. Fletcher said she would ask for the answer, but she felt it may be the amnesty that was in place for the EFLAs.

Lentine asked about the first-time homebuyer assistance program referenced on Page 8. Fletcher stated that this is still in place, and she has done three closings associated with Rose Court. Alden confirmed that these monies come from the HOME funds.

Trask felt there would not be a huge participation at this meeting.

Fletcher passed out copies of Sections 11 and 12 and asked the Board if they wanted the incentive zoning language. The Board did not have any issues with this language.

Fletcher confirmed with the Board that the language concerning the CPA should change. Sweet had wording stating they were going to consider forming a committee. She would

ask Sweet to change the language to read that they would recommend the Selectmen form a committee.

Fletcher said they would be changing the night of their monthly meeting since Trask had a conflict with Monday nights. It was confirmed with the Board that the meetings would now be held on the third Wednesday of each month. The next monthly meeting would be on April 16, 2014.

LIP Discussion re: 58 River Street and 78 Holten Street

Fletcher told the Board that the property at 58 River Street being developed by Dan Martignetti is giving the Trust two ownership units on Venice Street, and the Holten Street development will add one affordable rental unit.

Fletcher informed the Board that it has been discovered that in order to be added to the SHI, the units have to go through the LIP process, which is arduous and long. The cost is \$4,000 for the application fee. The cost for a consultant to help navigate the process can be from \$6,000 to \$10,000. It is the same cost for a large project like Conifer Commons as it is for one unit. For a small developer this is a big deal, and Fletcher said the developer could go back to the ZBA and Planning Board to free them from this requirement. She said it would take months for the developers to get these units on the LIP. The ZBA and the Planning Board have the authority to offer the developers relief and Fletcher felt it may make the ZBA and Planning Board look at these practices. It may be too stringent on the small developer. Since they mostly have small developments, the Planning Board may feel that the Multi-Family Inclusionary Zoning language may need to be amended. Because of the cost, the ZBA may not require affordable housing when negotiating their variances.

Fletcher said the LIP process could be paid by the Trust. The Trust has contributed more to other housing projects in Town. The other alternative, since they are going to be at the ten percent threshold, is to put the same housing restriction on the property, and not count the unit on the SHI. They would still be creating affordable housing but not adding to our SHI.

Trask asked if the developers for Venice Street or Holten Street had approached her about this, and Fletcher responded the developer of Holten Street had approached Kate Day. Alden pointed out that that unit was a voluntary unit. Gates could not imagine this developer just offering a unit.

Alden felt if they pay the cost of the application process for the developer, they are opening the door for others to request funding for their projects. He felt they would have the same issue for bigger developers. Fletcher said that the level of assistance could be determined by the size of the development.

Fletcher added that when she and Kate Day discussed this issue, Day stated that the Town of Ipswich has a part-time person who deals with affordable housing developments and qualifying applicants. Fletcher has contacted Terry Anderson from the Town of

Ipswich's Planning office and although he has never participated in a LIP process he did express interest in participating on a per project basis. Fletcher asked that he forward his job experience as well as his hourly/project rates.

The Trust continued their discussion about both 170 Holten Street and 2A & B Venice Street. Alden stated that it was his opinion that the owner of the 58 River Street project had financially benefited greatly by being allowed to develop his affordable housing units off site. Alden does not believe that any financial assistance should be offered to assist with the DHCD's SHI process. Trask said that an affordable unit has a deed restriction anyway. He asked how the Trust would know if owner of the Holten Street property rented it to a relative?

Fletcher responded that there is a monitoring process. Gates asked who monitors the unit, and Fletcher responded it would be the Trust. Gates asked whether the Trust still monitors the property, even if it goes through the application process. This was confirmed that affordable rental properties are monitored on a yearly basis.

Alden asked if they would be hurt if they did not put the units on the SHI, and Fletcher said it would not hurt them now, but it could when the next census is certified. Alden felt they needed to look at the negative side to this.

Gates said that the owner needs to maintain the units' affordability whether it is added to the SHI or not.

Fletcher explained that the developer could go back to the ZBA. Lentine asked what the cost would be to a developer if they chose to go back to the ZBA. Fletcher said there would be none, unless he retained an attorney.

Fletcher said there is a concern for the future.

Trask said that the ZBA would struggle with the recommendation made by the Trust. Trask said that the developer would come to the Trust before going to the ZBA. The Trust's recommendation would be to include or not include the unit on the SHI. The ZBA, however, could override the Trust.

Gates asked if Martignetti would look for a break.

Trask felt if a developer hadn't done their due diligence they may be surprised. He understands Martignetti may come back surprised. He reiterated that the does not mind doing this on a case by case matter.

Gates asked the Board if they felt it should be done on a case by case basis. Fletcher asked the Board for a consensus. Trask felt they should forgo the SHI.

Fletcher stated that the Holten Street developer knows the cost.

Gates felt this was a subjective matter.

Trask felt that they could make the recommendation. This is one of the pieces of the subjective puzzle. He doesn't know if they can come to some consistency. Trask said they barter and if part of that approval process is to complete everything except the SHI; it could be the tipping point on the Holten Street development. He felt it would not be a tipping point on the Riverview project.

Gates asked what the consensus was.

Fletcher said that a developer would come before the Board, and then the Trust would make their recommendation to the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals.

Trask stated that they have to conform to all other requirements of the DHCD, other than the notation of the SHI. He asked if everyone was comfortable with this.

Trask felt the Board should write a letter to the DHCD regarding these fees. He asked if there might be a possibility that the Planning Board and other housing committees could come together to write this letter.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Tish Lentine
Clerk