



DANVERS AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

TOWN HALL, DANVERS, MASSACHUSETTS 01923
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Minutes July 16, 2014

Attending: Gardner Trask, John Alden, Sally Calhoun, Carla King and Stacey Bernson

Staff: Susan Fletcher and Francine Butler

Minutes of April 16, 2014 and June 24, 2014

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously voted to approve the minutes of April 16, 2014 and June 24, 2014.

Housing Production Plan: June 24th Planning Board Meeting Debrief; Board of Selectmen Meeting August 5, 2014

Trask said that there will be a meeting on August 5th to present the Housing Production Plan to the Selectmen. He said that the presentation to the Planning Board went well. Sweet led the discussion with bullet points, and he felt they could add brevity. Alden felt the Planning Board is vital to the success of the Danvers Affordable Housing Trust (DAHT). He did not want the Planning Board to think that they were there to argue with them, and he felt the Trust needed to answer questions asked by the Planning Board. Alden hopes that they do not need to go into that level of detail with the Selectmen.

Trask said that the Planning Board was very focused on zoning issues. The Selectmen will be concerned with the social and financial impact as well as what is going to happen in the future. Dan Bennett was at the first meeting with the Planning Board along with Diane Langlais. Diane Langlais was at the first Planning Board meeting to clarify some questions she had and she was comfortable with what was presented.

Fletcher felt the first meeting diffused some of the questions that members of the Planning Board had.

Trask said that Langlais thought that mixed-use downtown was to be exclusively affordable. He felt that most of the Selectmen will not have issues with the Housing Production Plan.

Fletcher felt the Selectmen will be happy and feel comfortable with the plan since the Planning Board has endorsed it.

Trask told the Board that Extended Stay Corporation had not renewed its lease with the State. Fletcher does not know what they are going to do for an alternative since they are not building or

expanding shelters. There are still families that need to be taken care of. Trask said that the Selectmen will focus on the ten percent threshold. He felt it would be good to have more up-to-date information on projects.

Fletcher said that she called the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to see where they are with Conifer Commons and 360 Andover Street, but she has not heard back from them.

Alden asked if Selectmen are in fear of an ugly 40B. Trask responded that he and Dan Bennett want to get the protection that will come from the Town reaching its 10% level of affordable housing. However he added that they also want to serve the social need. David Mills and Diane Langlais have not experienced a 40B. Bill Clark has ill feelings about the ones that we were forced to accept. The Selectmen will be happy to know that we are near or have crossed over the ten percent threshold. He suggested that they may want to show pictures of the Coolidge project at the meeting.

Calhoun asked what was happening on Coolidge. Fletcher told her that the project had started with the first floor completed and framed. Habitat needs to focus on a project in Lynn for two weeks, and then they will be back. Habitat has pushed back the completion date for the project to October or November. Calhoun confirmed that they had originally wanted to complete the project before the schools opened in September.

Trask said that the meeting with the Selectmen would be straightforward. He would stay in his seat as a Selectman.

Calhoun stated that the Planning Board asked detailed questions about the Housing Production Plan. They are the experts on a lot of development issues within the Town. They have a different perspective, and she thought it was a good result.

Trask said that he was glad to see the edits done that Sweet agreed to. He was not pleased with her response to being asked to update items within the plan, nor her verbal remarks about making modifications. He told the Board that he had to pressure her to be at the meeting, and he was not pleased with her customer interaction towards the end of this project.

Fletcher told the Board that she had the most recent version of the Housing Production Plan.

King asked if Stacey Bernson had been formally introduced to the Board, and introductions were made.

Updates:
Conifer Commons

Fletcher told the Board that Conifer Commons was fully occupied. She has a call into DHCD, but has not received a return call as of yet as to the status of their SHI application.

356 Andover Street

Fletcher said that Phase 2 of 360 Andover Street is being built. Phase 1 has been purchased and occupied. The First Time Homebuyer Program is being used with this project. She had a closing this morning where the primary lender rejected the affordability provision. The buyer now has to find a new primary lender, or they may find another investor.

Fletcher said that she is still waiting to hear from DHCD regarding where 356 Andover Street is. The project was a 40B and should have been counted when building permits were issued.

56-58 River Street

Fletcher said that the developer had submitted their application to have the two units on Venice Street to be included on our SHI. Trask gave a brief overview of the project to Bernson.

Calhoun asked what happened with the gas line. Alden felt that the gas line was put in based on the trenches in the street. Calhoun asked if this was going to cost the developer a fortune. Alden felt they may have installed the gas line for a minimal cost. Alden said that they needed to increase the line to support the project, and the developer may have had to incur the cost to tie in. Alden was surprised the developer did not know about this. Trask responded that the developer was told the project could be supported by the present line.

Cherry Street

Trask said that Cherry Street was fully occupied. He went to the ribbon cutting. Fletcher said the units are gorgeous. The architectural details inside were very sensitive. They were little details that did not cost anything. Light was coming in from every direction and there was a lot of attention to detail in the interior.

Trask said that the railings on the outside of the property had architectural details that accented the property.

Fletcher said that the second floor was being occupied by a mother, father, three children and the wife's mother. The cost to build this project was very expensive due in part to the Housing Authority having to pay prevailing wages.

78 Holten Street

Fletcher told the Board that the last letter was signed by Lennie Marshall, and they will be submitting the LIP to Janice. She said that other than Habitat, she believes that all of other projects have been submitted to DHCD for approval. However that needs to be confirmed after she speaks to a representative at DHCD.

Calhoun asked how many units were from that project, and Fletcher responded one.

55 Ferncroft

It is an office building on Ferncroft Road that only has 30% occupancy and is not doing well. The property is in the Highway Corridor zone. They were looking for a friendly 40B, but Wayne Marquis said no. The owners did not want to pursue it since they want this project to be a “friendly” 40B.

Fletcher said that Habitat will need assistance to get the Mill Street property qualified and get through the hoops. Calhoun asked if this would be the case for Coolidge as well, and Fletcher said yes.

Trask felt that legal counsel should advise the Selectmen and Steering Committee on what can and cannot be asked of an applicant.

Alden asked if the charter needed to be changed regarding the legality of a Town Manager needing to live in Danvers. Trask said that this would not be able to be done at this time. It is something that needs to be addressed in the future.

Fletcher stated that she had heard from Jackie that Habitat is looking for a paid director. Fletcher said that when she went to a housing meeting in June, she found that some communities have paid staff. They do not deal with the construction; they only deal with administrative issues such as SHI applications.

Trask asked Fletcher if the excess HOME monies were returned, and Fletcher said no. She received two applications from people that had applied months ago and now had purchase and sale agreements. Each applicant received \$10,000, so they only had to return \$1,200. Fletcher told the Board that there is a symbiotic relationship with Rose Court and the HOME program. East Boston Savings Bank is financing most of this project, and they advise applicants about the HOME program.

Calhoun had a few questions concerning the financials, and they were explained.

Alden asked if the Trust would be receiving HOME funds for this year. Fletcher responded that they would be receiving approximately \$41,000. They usually get \$83,000. This gives them money for four houses.

Calhoun asked for an explanation of how the HOME money worked. Fletcher said that they need to be first-time homebuyers and is based on income. If the applicant qualifies, funds are matched up to \$10,000. There is no monthly interest payment; however, there is a five year affordability restriction. The funds are paid back when the property is sold.

Calhoun confirmed if a young couple had \$10,000 for a deposit, they could borrow another \$10,000.

Fletcher told the Board that this program allowed the affordable units at Rose Court to be brought to a 20% level which eliminates the private mortgage insurance requirement.

Fletcher said that in all the years that the Town has been administering the HOME Program there has only been two short sales and no foreclosures. Calhoun asked what happened to the funds from the short sales, and Fletcher said the funds were lost.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously voted to accept the financials.

New Business

Fletcher said that when DHAT was closed, our attorney provided an affidavit regarding the receipt of money turned over to the Trust was in the approximate amount of \$70,000. The Attorney General's office notified our attorney that they want to know the exact figure. Trask signed the letter indicating the exact figure.

Fletcher told the Board that Burt Russell, a former Korean War marine, lives on Andover Street near the Middleton line across from Lebel's Grove. His wife is suffering from Alzheimer's, and he is intent on keeping her at home. He wants to divide his property and offer an affordable home for a veteran's family. She told the Board that she gave Russell the contact information for Don Preston along with John Ratka, who runs a veteran's housing organization in Haverhill. She spoke with Don, who attended a Habitat training, and Habitat's number one priority is veterans.

Fletcher told the Board that Don Preston will be coming to the next meeting requesting additional funding and to discuss the four parcels that the Town has taken for tax title for possibly four housing lots.

Calhoun asked when the next meeting would be since they were meeting with the Selectmen on August 5th. The Board felt they would like to keep the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Alden asked why the Edmund's Cove project did not offer an affordable unit. Fletcher pointed out that it was not a multi-family project. Alden felt they should have contributed something.

Trask said that that can be put on the agenda. Zoning should be one of our priorities.

Fletcher mentioned there was one other item under new business. The Town has received a \$15,000 grant to do a study and create an overlay district for the downtown area which would allow housing in areas where it is not allowed at the present time.

Trask wants to talk about zoning for the next meeting. He wants to work with the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals to craft language for Town Meeting to close loopholes and broaden inclusionary zoning.

Calhoun said that within planning circles, cluster housing is coming back as a way to minimize the footprint and open space.

Fletcher stated that the problem with cluster development in Danvers is that it is a Special Permit. A number of communities have it as a by right or offer increased density. There are many more hoops for them to go through for cluster subdivisions. The developer would have a

lot more development costs associated with the special permit than by doing a straight subdivision.

Fletcher said that by the next meeting the Housing Production Plan will have the endorsement of the Selectmen to send to DHCD. Once the plan is endorsed and accepted, copies will be distributed.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Tish Lentine
Clerk