

**Winchester Housing Partnership Board  
Minutes for the Meeting on Wednesday, January 16, 2019**

Present: Chair John Suhrbier, Allan Rodgers, Naomi DeLairre, Diab Jerius (Planning Board), Marty Jones, Laura Fitzgerald (COA), Zeina Marchant (School Committee), Lisa Matrundola (DAC), and Felicity Tuttle as Clerk Pro Tem.

Unable to Attend: Mike Bettencourt (Select Board), Cathy Camp Boyle (WHA), David Miller (Conservation Committee), Jerome Garciano.

**NEXT MEETING DATE: Wednesday, February 20 [school vacation week]**

**(1) First Time Home Buyer Tax Assessments**

Based on information provided by owners of the town's FTHB homes, the December tax re-assessments may be higher than they should be and therefore should be adjusted to either the amount originally paid for the unit or the increase limited to the allowed resale price. Apparently an outside firm does the assessments and appears to have made an error on at least some, if not many, of the FTHB properties. Abatement requests are due February 1. The Chair wonders whether there is something the Housing Partnership Board should suggest. Naomi DeLairre suggested that a letter should be sent from the Town, by either the Town Manager's Office or the Town Assessor's Office, to each of the FTHB owners to warn them that there may be an issue with their assessed valuations and, if any question, file for the abatement. The Chair agreed to look further into this matter.

**(2) Municipal Affordable Housing Trusts**

Next Wednesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, an information session is being convened to discuss ways of creating a fund which can be used to provide more affordable housing in town. Shelley Goehring of the Massachusetts Housing Partnership will make a presentation on Municipal Affordable Housing Trusts (MAHT) and then lead a discussion. The purpose is information sharing to help determine the potential applicability of this type of trust to Winchester. Marty Jones has agreed to be the Moderator. WINCAM is planning on broadcasting the meeting live, with a video available for on-demand viewing. Lisa Matrundola suggested we might have some of the MAHT guideline reports available for people to take home.

Thus far, 110 communities in MA have created MAHTs of which 80% have Community Preservation Trusts which are helping to significantly fund the MAHTs of those towns. Eventually, it would be helpful to have Shelley Goehring describe different compositions for the Board of Trustees and other organizational aspects, but these are not now in her current group of slides.

**(3) Master Plan**

An initial draft of the Phase One "existing conditions" report has been completed. In response to comments provided by the Master Plan Steering Committee, revisions are being made and an updated version will be presented on February 4 to a joint meeting of the Planning Board and Select Board. Thereafter, the report will be circulated for public comments.

Phase Two of the Master Plan work will focus on a vision and goals for what Winchester should look like in the future. Phase Three then will develop strategies for how to accomplish the agreed upon goals.

The Chair asked whether the WHPB would be interested in doing a guided workshop on the Master Plan as one of our early spring meetings. There was agreement among the members present that they would like to do this.

The Rotary also might be interested in having a noontime workshop rather than their normal speaker format.

The website to find information online is [courb.co/Winchester](http://courb.co/Winchester).

**(4) Housing Production Plan**

A response has not yet been received from the Mass. DHCD on the final plan that was submitted.

**(5) Waterfield Project**

Work on the potential redevelopment of the Waterfield parcel has been totally stalled since last summer. Both the Town manager and the Town Planner, though have recently expressed in reviving this initiative. However, they don't want to put out a totally open-ended RFP; the RFP should describe the specific kind and of the project the town is looking for. In addition, there is concern with preparing a RFP before the MBTA has arrived at a fairly firm plan for the renovation of the Winchester center Commuter Rail station. It was suggested that a conversation with Beth Rudolph, Town Engineer, would be helpful in this regard.

Conversations were held in the past with the owners of the adjacent land to see if they were interested either in selling or expanding their property. At the time, they were not interested. Both the Planning Board and the Select Board feel it may be worth approaching the owners once again.

In the technical support provided last year by the Massachusetts Housing Partnership, they created an alternative design layout to that originally developed by Dennis Carlone which took into consideration both the multiple constraints of the Waterfield site and considerations of financial feasibility. Neither the Planning nor the Select Board liked the MHP alternative and suggested that the discussion once again be widened to incorporate use of the adjacent parcels. The opinion of MHP staff was that even were the adjacent owners able to add an additional story on their buildings, the cost, disruption, and loss of tenants during construction would likely not appeal to them.

The suggestion was for the Chair to continue these background conversations and perhaps eventually form a very small informal working group.

**(6) Winning Farm Ron Bonvie Development**

With construction now underway, the town is beginning to prepare the formal Local Initiative Program (LIP) application for submission to the Massachusetts DHCD. Ron Bonvie provided background information that has been reviewed by Jennifer Cafarella, Allan Rodgers, and John Suhrbier. Their conclusion was that the information was both incomplete and ambiguous, so a series of questions and requests was provided back to Mr. Bonvie.

The most serious issue concerns the location of the two affordable housing units to be provided as a part of this development, one of which is to be an end unit and one a center unit. Bonvie has proposed that both of these units be near the entrance. While the Select Board has reportedly supported this request, the Legal Counsel of the Massachusetts DHCD has ruled that both units being near the entrance rather than being proportionally distributed within the development violates state requirements.

**(7) 20 Glenwood Avenue**

The Town foreclosed on this property for non-payment of taxes. Meg White, Procurement, and Mark Twogood, Town Counsel, are beginning to think about getting together an RFP for affordable housing. It is just a 2,800 sf lot so it would have to use just the current foundation to

be grandfathered under current zoning. Alternatively, a larger building footprint would have to go to the Zoning Board of Appeals for approval. Some of the neighbors have expressed an informal interest in procuring the property in order to preserve it as open space. One or more non-profit housing corporations could be interested in using this location for Project Based Section 8 housing.

(8) **248 Cross**

Diab Jerius reported that this is a large 21,000 sq. ft. lot on Cross Street which backs up against The Willows. It was bought for development purposes by the current owner in November, 2018. However, there is a historical demolition delay on the existing house, and they currently are waiting out the delay period. The present proposal to build 20 units of housing under Chapter 40B. Based on initial discussions, the Planning Board has concluded that there is not sufficient parking to support a development of this size.

(9) **CVS Site**

A Foreclosure auction is scheduled at the Washington Street site for 11:00 AM on January 31<sup>th</sup> (subsequently postponed). Owners of the various parcels have not been paying their mortgage. The current purported assignee of the mortgage is seeking to do the foreclosure auction but there was no list in the published notice of the various assignees from East Boston Savings Bank, which was the original lender. There are five parcels of land involved in the foreclosure sale. The initial deposit is to be \$150,000.

(10) **735 Main Street, the Margaret Mahoney Land at the Corner of Skillings Road and Main Street**

February 25<sup>th</sup> is the scheduled ZBA continuation hearing for this proposed development. The Town is trying to come up with a sensible change for the little island-no-cut-through area that would allow Main Street traffic coming from the north to enter this property. While the lot is 17,000 sq. ft., a good deal of the property is subject to an easement so much of the land is not buildable. Chris Mulhern is the architect for this project, as well as for the proposed housing by Seaver for the Fells Hardware land. Comments submitted by the Planning Board, Design Review, and other Town Boards consistently opposed the currently proposed design and layout.

(11) **Land Off Highland**

Craig Miller is moving forward with his single-family private home development. As part of the agreement with the town, he will tear down the town owned house located at 22 Highland. There will be a Home Owner Association (HOA) for the development, and there will be an ANR to subdivide for each of the homes. Members of the Housing Partnership Board are not aware of any initiative yet to move forward with the planning and construction of the new affordable housing for this location.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Felicity Tuttle*

Felicity Tuttle, Clerk pro Tem.