

**Winchester Housing Partnership Board  
Minutes for the Meeting of January 20, 2021**

**Present:** Chair John Suhrbier, Allan Rodgers, Michael Bettencourt (Select Board), Diab Jerius (Planning Board), Edward Martin (COA), Marty Jones (WAHT), Michelle Bergstrom (School Committee), David Miller (Conservation Committee), Jifeng Liu, and Felicity Tuttle as Clerk Pro Tem.

**Absent:** Cathy Camp Boyle (WHA), Naomi DeLairre, Lisa Matrundola (DAC)

**NEXT MEETING DATE: Wednesday, February 17, 2021**

(1) **Minutes for November, 2020:** Minutes unanimously approved.

(2) **PUD Zoning:** The following language is included in the statement of purpose for the PUD Zoning: that it provide “more diverse housing options,” but there are no details for interpretation. HPB members contributed the following suggestions: greater housing variety and true public space are key factors that should be considered as satisfying this provision. Another said that a broader public interest should be served, and application should include consultation with the HPB, DAC and WHA. The Chair said that he will update the draft with these suggestions and then send to the Planning Board with a copy to the Select Board.

(3) **Procedures for the Review of Affordable Housing Provisions Contained in Applications to Build MultiFamily Housing:** While projects are still in the planning stages, it is useful to include consideration of how applicable affordable housing provisions will be achieved, and to review the proposed approach with DHCD. If anything is not consistent with DHCD requirements, then the developer’s proposal will have to be modified. Past experience consistently demonstrates that it is useful for the developer to meet and work cooperatively with the HPB. Essentially, the developer should come and present to the HPB early just as is now done with the Design Review Committee. After agreement is reached with the HPB and the Planning Board, informal concurrence should be sought from the DHCD before formal Planning Board approval is given. Formal DHCD is granted upon submission of a Local Initiative Program application by the town and the developer, which typically occurs during construction. It may be helpful for the Planning Board to create information for developers which summarizes important DHCD requirements, such as where the affordable housing units should be located within a building or project. Diab said that when such a draft is ready, he will ask that it be presented to the Planning Board as well as to the Select Board.

(4) **654 Main (Fells Hardware):** An updated affordable housing plan was prepared by the developer, but the new plan still shows only five affordable units where it should be six so as to satisfy the requirements of the CBD Zoning Code. In addition, the proposed affordable units are among the smallest of the overall units to be provided as a part of this proposed development. As a result, the developers have been asked to again revise this portion of their submission.

The developers have raised the question of rather than providing a total of six units at 80% and 120% of the Boston AMI, there could be 5 units all at 80% of the area median income with all of these units therefore eligible for the town’s Subsidized Housing Inventory. This alternative, however, does not satisfy the zoning code. The zoning code refers to 10% and 5% separately, with each category rounded up, rather than 15% of the whole. For a 36 unit building as is being presented, the 3.6 units associated with the 10 percent inclusionary component is rounded up to 4 units. It is recognized that for the developers, the economics helps to combine and round up

only once. Where the selling price for the 120% AMI units is higher at \$350K to \$400K and the 80% units may have a selling price of \$260K, the selling price of the 80% AMI affordable units may be lower than their construction costs.

Ian Gillespie also has asked whether the proportional size criterion is based on individual units or 15% of the square footage of the overall housing space. This issue is not specifically covered in DHCD guidelines, but we anticipate that this is not how DHCD views the percentages. Rather, they are looking at the distribution of individual unit sizes.

- (5) **Winning Farm:** The deadline for applications to purchase one of the two affordable units is tomorrow at 5:00 PM. The Lottery then will be held on January 26. Arrangements for a visit to each unit then will be made. So far, there are 28 applications: 18 of these have been approved 4 were rejected as not meeting the required criteria, and the remaining are still being reviewed. Regarding the Winchester Local Preference for Unit 1, 5 applicants at this time qualify. The Lottery will be held by ZOOM.
  - (6) **36 Elmwood:** Basic information required for the LIP application was received in July, but a reply to the resulting questions has not yet been received. There will be a charge for the Garage parking, but this fee will be prorated to \$10 per month for the affordable unit. Condominium voting rights for the affordable unit will be equal to that of the market rate units.
  - (7) **"CVS" Washington and Swanton Property:** It is moving along on two simultaneous tracks. One is the approach of a normal purchase acquisition. The Town is in discussion with the owner's attorney to try to get to an agreed price. If that approach does not work, the Town is also preparing to proceed with eminent domain. The Town does have the \$3.25M appraised range. There were no development applications filed on the previous P&S's so no additional guidance.
- A Draft RFP for development the property is being prepared by town staff and 5 residents, 3 of whom are from the neighborhood. Jennifer Goldson is providing consulting assistance. The Select Board has not yet seen a draft of what this group has been working on but the idea is for the development of some 55-60 housing units., with the possibility of also including a modest amount of street level retail. The desire is to recover all of the town acquisition cost.
- (8) **Waterfield Land Development Agreement:** Civico will be meeting next week with Town Manager Lisa Wong. In addition, the Finance Committee is reviewing and assessing the associated financial issues. A working meeting is being convened next week to review a preliminary financial spreadsheet that has been developed by John Miller of the Finance Committee.
  - (9) **River Street:** The current plan is to break ground for construction at some point between April and June.
  - (10) **416 Cambridge Street Winchester North:** The developers SEB and the appellants apparently are working on a settlement that will enable this proposed development to proceed into construction. The plan is for the same number of units, but with a changed architectural design. Assuming the parties are able to reach agreement, SEB then would have to go back to the ZBA for approval of the modified design.

(11) **Margaret Mahoney Lot on Main Street :** This still is in litigation.

(12) **Select Board Committee on Diversity and Anti-Racism:** This new committee has had a couple of meetings. They are sending out a survey on race, terminology to different departments of town employees and staff, as well as conducting an initial round of interviews with town

officials and staff.

(13)**CHAPA – Housing Workshops:** CHAPA is conducting three Thursday afternoon workshops; the first was held last week . These are covering implementation of the Chapter 40B housing, as well as the recently passed new economic development law. This new Massachusetts legislation, among many other things, makes the approval of zoning changes a simple majority vote. Particularly in suburbs where single family zoning is so prevalent, this change will positively affect the ability of municipalities to increase multifamily zoning. This legislation also contains a provision that requires a MultiFamily zoning district within a half mile of MBTA and commuter rail stations. For Winchester, it appears that such a district located in the CBD would be sufficient; a separate district will not be needed for the Wedgemere Station. A third change is appeals of an approved project now will require the posting of a \$50,000 bond.

As a part of the CHAPA discussion, Katie Lacey of the Massachusetts Housing Partnership described a new national database that has been developed containing information on inclusionary zoning ordinances that have been developed throughout the U.S. Of the 1,400 total, 75 percent are in New Jersey, Massachusetts and California!

Marty Jones of the HPB then described a HOUSING NAVIGATOR database that is being created. This will document the characteristics of all Chapter 40B housing units that have been built statewide, including which units are rental housing, the number that actually the affordable , and accessibility provisions.

(14)**88 Harvard Street:** As a result of the new Winchester Flexible Zoning ByLaw, two units are being saved: (one over one) which otherwise would have been taken down to erect a larger new building. This is a historically Black neighborhood and the Planning Board and many others believe the character of the existing older buildings should be saved. The owner is very pleased as he is going to be able to build both new units and save the existing building. They are working now on how to restore it. This will require an architect and have a conservation restriction for the future. We hope there will be a plaque on the building.

Nancy Schrock has done such excellent research on this area of town. The former Church on Cross Street, now single family home, was an important part of this neighborhood. It would be great if we could get the new owner to agree to have a plaque there as well.

Adjourned at about 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Felicity Tuttle

Felicity Tuttle, Clerk pro Tem.