

MINUTES
Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust
May 23, 2016

Members present: Fred Mills, Chair, Marc Johnson, Michael Lombardo, and Peter Britton.

Town Officials and staff present: Scott Maddern, Selectman, Bill Wilson, Selectman, Patrick Reffett, Director of Planning and Inspections and Dorr Fox, Community Projects Coordinator.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

UPDATE ON HABITAT FOR HUMANITY PROJECT AT 270 ASBURY STREET,
HAMILTON, MA

Don Preston from Habitat for Humanity gave an update on the project. He stated that they had gone before the Hamilton Zoning Board of Appeals and will be returning for a continued hearing. The Zoning Board of Appeals wanted variation in the exterior appearance for the two single family homes. Therefore, while the homes will have identical floor plans, there will be variation for the facades. One house will face Asbury Street, while the other house will face Lincoln Avenue. This plan may also allow them to save two Hemlock trees on the site. The Zoning Board of Appeals is considering waiving setbacks to move the location of the buildings on the site.

Marc Johnson inquired whether the Zoning Board of Appeals has been favorably inclined towards the project. Mr. Preston stated that they had.

Fred Mills noted that the Zoning Board of Appeals had a discussion regarding having the two units on the site as a duplex. He had told the Zoning Board of Appeals chair that he believed that the Affordable Housing Trust preferred to have two single family homes on the site. Michael Lombardo stated that two single family homes is preferable. Mr. Lombardo made a motion to support two single family homes on the site versus a duplex. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Mr. Mills stated that he will send a letter to the Zoning Board of Appeal stating the Affordable Housing Trust position. The next Zoning Board of Appeals meeting is on June 1st.

Mr. Mills asked Mr. Preston whether the process has been good in Hamilton. Mr. Preston stated that it has been good to work with the Planning Department.

DISCUSSION ON DEED RESTRICTED PROPERTIES IN HAMILTON

Referring to the list of deed restricted affordable housing units in Hamilton, Mr. Mills noted that there are 84 deed restricted affordable units in town. He noted that several of these deed restrictions will expire soon, so in the future there could be fewer affordable units. He noted that these particular units have a 30 year deed

restriction. He explained that deed restrictions often get renewed when a property is sold. However, in this case many of the unit owners have stayed in the properties a long time, and as a result the deed restriction will be lifted. Other units in town are restricted in perpetuity and therefore will not expire.

Mr. Johnson inquired why Carriage House Junction has no units listed. Patrick Reffett stated that the units are not completed. When they are completed they will be listed. Mr. Johnson stated he thought that they were completed. Mr. Reffett stated that the paperwork has not been completed to get them on the list. He also noted that Firehouse Place is not on the list. When it is listed, it will increase the number of affordable units by four units. Mr. Johnson noted that this will increase Hamilton's percentage of affordable units to 3.3 percent.

Bob Curry stated that there are Housing Authority units on Union Street and Railroad Avenue that should be counted. Mr. Johnson noted that they are on the list.

Russ Tanzer stated that ensuring affordable housing units are provided in a development project should be tied to the Certificate of Occupancy. Mr. Johnson stated that while the state requires this, it may not always be implemented. Mr. Mills noted that affordable housing units must be affirmatively marketed and deed restricted in order to be on the list. While other units in town may be affordable, they do not contribute to the ten percent requirement.

OPEN DISCUSSION ON MILES RIVER VILLAGE PROJECT (LONGMEADOW WAY)

Mr. Mills opened the discussion by noting that there has been a lot of discussion in the community that the Affordable Housing Trust has been very involved with the Miles River Village project. He explained that the Affordable Housing Trust did not introduce the property to Harborlight. The Affordable Housing Trust is not in partnership with Harborlight to develop the property. The Affordable Housing Trust recognizes that there is a lot of concern in the community regarding the project.

William Shore stated that he believes that the site is not appropriate for such a large project due to its location. There will be a lot of traffic generated by the project and there is only one access to the site. It is located adjacent to the high school. He is also concerned about contamination of the Miles River. He believes that affordable housing projects should be spread throughout the town.

Bill Shields stated that he wishes to incorporate into the minutes by reference all testimony from the previous Affordable Housing Trust meeting and the meeting held by Harborpoint at Christ Church.

Mr. Shields expressed his concern that the Affordable Housing Trust voted in favor of the project. Mr. Johnson noted that at the time of the vote, the project consisted of 24 to 28 units and was very conceptual. Mr. Shields stated that following that vote, Andrew DeFranza stated that he was going to negotiate with Mr. Miller. By October, the project was 108 units. Mr. Johnson reiterated that the Affordable Housing Trust

voted on a much smaller project. Mr. Shields stated that he has read all of the Affordable Housing Trust minutes pertaining to the project. Mr. Mills noted that the members of the Affordable Housing Trust have also read all of the minutes. Mr. Johnson stated that Scott Maddern, Chair of the Board of Selectmen, has instructed the Affordable Housing Trust to consider the Miles River Village development as a project, even though it has not yet been filed.

Bill Wilson, Selectman, requested the Affordable Housing Trust vote on whether they support the project with 108 units. Mr. Mills stated that he would like more information. He questioned whether Mr. Wilson was requesting a vote on the current concept or a revised project. Mr. Lombardo stated that he does not want to design the project. He believes that 108 units is a large number for the site. He stated that the senior housing building is large. He believes that the project has grown considerably and is now very large for the site.

Mr. Wilson stated that what he asking is whether 108 units is right for this parcel of land. Mr. Johnson stated that this is a fair question. Peter Britton stated that there are several suppositions when voting on this question, such as will the property perk? Mr. Lombardo noted that the Planning Board has negotiated other projects in town, such as Canterbrook. Mr. Johnson stated that he has no problem stating that he thinks 108 units is too big.

Peter Clark, Planning Board member, explained that the Planning Board stated to the Board of Selectmen that there should be no further subdivision of the site. He is surprised that there are so many more units on the site. Mr. Johnson stated that he does not remember the Planning Board sending a letter. Mr. Shields stated that this happened in 2010.

Mr. Johnson made a motion that the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust approves of the project, as currently conceptually presented, with 108 units. Mr. Lombardo seconded the motion. There was discussion on the motion. Mr. Mills noted that the Affordable Housing Trust is not the permitting authority for the project, and that it only acts in an advisory capacity. Mr. Johnson stated that the Affordable Housing Trust can right-size a project and give a recommendation. Mr. Lombardo stated that he does not agree that the Affordable Housing Trust should right-size development projects. A vote was taken, with three members in opposition and one member (Mr. Mills) abstaining. Mr. Mills explained that he does not have enough information to vote on this motion.

Mr. Johnson stated that there are still issues pertaining to the project, including traffic. Mr. Lombardo stated that Harborlight is one of the better affordable housing developers of 40B projects. They worked well with the Town on Firehouse Place. They are a good organization and he would be happy to work with them on other projects. Mr. Johnson stated that he would consider a project on the Longmeadow site that was larger than 24 units. Mr. Mills stated that he appreciates that Harborlight has been willing to delay the permitting of the project in order to have a

community discussion on it. Mr. Lombardo stated that there are a lot of developers that would not have done this. Mr. Mills concurred.

Mr. Mills stated that he would like to work with Mr. DeFranza to mold the project. Mr. Johnson stated that perhaps the Board of Selectmen would be the right board to take on this assignment.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Clark mentioned the Hamilton Development Corporation property on Willow Street as an appropriate site for affordable housing. He also mentioned the book 'Pocket Neighborhoods' by Ross Chapin. He believes that Mr. Chapin's book is appropriate for Hamilton. Dorr Fox explained that the Hamilton Development Corporation is exploring its options for the development of their site. They are primarily interested in developing the site as a mixed use development, but they have discussed putting affordable housing in that mix. They had asked him to reach out to both Harborlight and the YMCA, who both develop affordable housing, to see if they are still interested in being involved in the project. Mr. Lombardo inquired why Harborlight was not initially interested in the Willow Street project. Mr. Fox stated that Mr. DeFranza had told him that Harborlight was interested in doing tax credit projects and they were limited in the number of tax credit projects they could do. The Willow Street project was too small to take on, considering this limitation.

Mr. Britton stated that the Affordable Housing Trust was created to be nimble so they could act quickly on projects, such as the day care center. Mr. Lombardo stated that the Affordable Housing Trust is not always nimble because it often needs to go to the Board of Selectmen to gain approval. Mr. Johnson stated that this is still more nimble than going to Town Meeting. Mr. Mills noted that the Affordable Housing Trust is a three year old board that is underfunded. Mr. Britton and Mr. Johnson discussed Community Preservation Committee funds and the Affordable Housing Trust funding for additional affordable housing projects. Mr. Johnson noted that there will be opponents to these other projects.

Mr. Tanzer stated that in his discussions with Andrew DeFranza, he stated that Harborlight is willing to take on many individual projects around Hamilton and lump them together and obtain tax credits. Mr. Johnson stated that they would need to finance all of the projects together.

Mr. Britton stated that with the declining school population, the Affordable Housing Trust should have a discussion on how affordable housing affects schools. Mr. Johnson stated that he believes that the entities to discuss this are the Board of Selectmen, the Finance Committee and the School Committee.

Mr. Lombardo made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 pm. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

