

DRAFT MINUTES
Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust
September 14, 2016

Members present: Marc Johnson, Peter Britton, Bill Wilson and Russ Tanzer.

Town staff present: Patrick Reffett, Director, Planning and Inspections, Mary Beth Lawton, Director, Council on Aging and Dorr Fox, Community Projects Coordinator.

Peter Britton called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Britton moved to approve the minutes of the September 1, 2016 meeting. Bill Wilson seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. The Trust decided to move their meeting that was scheduled for September 28th to October 5th. The meeting will start at 6 pm and will be at the Town Hall, if the Memorial Room is available.

POTENTIAL STATEMENT OF HAHT

Mr. Britton moved to have the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust make a statement that the creation of affordable housing for seniors is the Trust's highest priority. Russ Tanzer seconded the motion. Marc Johnson noted that while creating affordable housing for seniors is very important, he would like to know the consequences of making that statement. Mr. Britton noted that it had been a long time since housing was created for seniors in Hamilton. Bill Wilson stated that providing affordable housing for seniors is a priority, however, the overall mission of the Trust is to provide affordable housing in the town of Hamilton. He would prefer that the statement be that the Trust has the mission to provide affordable to the Town of Hamilton, with the current priority of senior housing and local preference. The motion was changed to state that the Trust's mission is to provide affordable housing in the Town of Hamilton with current priorities of senior housing and local preference. All of the members voted in favor of the revised motion.

STATUS OF HOST COMMUNITY AGREEMENT AND SCOPE OF SERVICES FOR CONSULTANT

Patrick Reffett explained that the Host Community Agreement is an agreement between the Town and a developer who wishes to create affordable housing in the Town. The document is currently under review by the Town's Legal Counsel. The Scope of Services contract is a contract from the Town for a planning and architecture consultant to review potential sites for affordable housing. This document is also being reviewed by Town Counsel. Mr. Wilson stated that the Board of Selectmen have reviewed the Host Community Agreement, made changes and authorized Mr. Reffett and Mr. Lombardo to implement it, once it has been approved by Legal Counsel. Mr. Wilson explained that the document is a guideline, not a binding contract, to allow developers and the Town to express shared goals. Jake Fiumara asked the identity of the groups that the Town has shared the

document with. Mr. Reffett stated that they have shared it with Habitat for Humanity and Harborlight, as well as other professional planners.

DISCUSSION OF APPROVED PROCESS

Mr. Wilson stated that he believes that the process as approved is a good process. He noted to the audience that it is proposed that the various sites be evaluated and scored. Mr. Britton noted that Mr. Johnson has put a lot of time into developing the process and documenting his perspective on each property. He is concerned that they need to act quickly. He hopes that when they ask other Boards to give them comments that they obtain these comments in a timely manner. Mr. Johnson stated that the process should not take a lot of time. The Trust is advisory, not the permitting authority. As long as they as they keep that in mind, the process should move forward quickly. Once they determine a property may suitable for affordable housing and a developer has signed onto the Host Community Agreement, they can act as an advocate for the project.

Mr. Wilson stated that he believes that Step 3 is the most impactful. This is the section to discuss impacts such as traffic, schools and the environment. He believes that when they identify issues they can forward this information to other boards. He suggests inviting the Planning Board to the next meeting. He is wondering where they are in the implementation of their advisory process, especially in terms of the Longmeadow project. Mr. Johnson noted that in step 2, the Trust has the opportunity to discuss issues with the public. He gave the example of being informed of the Blue Spotted Salamander habitat as an example of the good information that can be obtained during this step. He also noted that the public has the opportunity to give input during step 4.

Deb Safford, an abutter to the Maple Street site, suggested adding the “public” to the list of people to solicit input from in step 2 of the process. Mr. Johnson stated that he believes the intent of step 2 was to obtain information from the public, so he agrees that this should be added to the process. Ms. Safford inquired who would be the appropriate body to address various issues and whether there would be a priority. Mr. Johnson stated that he did not envision that the Trust would be responsible for creating or reviewing studies. For example, the Trust may identify the need for a traffic study, but not take the responsibility to have it completed. The Trust would request that the appropriate permitting board ensure that the issue be addressed.

Mary Beth Lawton stated that she would like to see the step of the process involving the architect get more weight. Mr. Johnson stated that he thinks the Trust needs to vet the issues of the sites early in the process, since some of the sites might drop out before they hire a consultant. He believes that a consultant should come into the process at step 4. Ms. Lawton believes that the Trust should hire a consultant to vet the general issues, not the specifics of designing a plan for the site. Mr. Britton stated that he understands that the consultant they will be hiring will only look at Town properties. Ms. Lawton stated she believes that the consultant should enter

the process early. If the consultant finds major issues on a site, then the Trust should drop the site. Mr. Wilson stated that he believes there is a role for the consultant at both steps 2 and 4. Mr. Johnson concluded that there really is not a disagreement.

Richard Boroff wanted to clarify that the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals generally react to development proposals that are presented to them. They generally are not involved with actual planning. Caleb Powers suggested that the Trust determine what they want for a project and evaluate the sites with that in mind. Dorr Fox suggested that they could put together a document listing their preferences for a project, including such issues as location, size, local preference and housing for seniors. He will forward a document put together from the Town of Weston as an example. Mr. Boroff stated that the details of a project are generally determined by a developer.

LOT OFF CENTRAL AND BAKER AVENUES (KNOWN AS LOT 85 ON ASSESSORS MAP 47)

Mr. Britton noted that while they will discuss the merits of the site, they need to decide whether they wish to have the lots released at Town Meeting for sale as affordable housing. Mr. Johnson addressed his document which evaluated the sites under consideration. Issues include traffic, environmental issues and visual impacts. Mr. Fox stated that Habitat for Humanity is interested in the site. Mr. Johnson noted that there would be a visual impact on the immediate abutters. There would not be a major impact on traffic. The project would need to be approved through Chapter 40B MGL. They do not know whether there are wetland issues or whether the site would perk. The site can only accommodate the creation of a few units. The Town could donate the land and therefore, there would be little cost to the Town. Town Meeting approval may be needed to release the site for sale. Jack Lawrence noted that the access could be off of Highland Street.

LINCOLN AVENUE SITE (KNOWN AS LOT 24 ON ASSESSORS MAP 47)

Mr. Fox explained that this lot was mostly wetlands. It is likely that one unit of affordable housing could be built on the site through a comprehensive permit. The Trust decided not to pursue the site for affordable housing due to the wetlands. Mr. Wilson inquired about the market value of the sites they were looking at.

SITE OFF OF LONGMEADOW WAY NEAR BAY ROAD

Mr. Johnson stated that there will be a direct visual and traffic impact to abutters, residents of Bay Road, and residents of Ortins Road. The project would require obtaining a comprehensive permit since multi-family housing is not permitted in the zoning district. The site appears to have adequate uplands and the soil has been tested for a septic system. There are multiple owners of the site, however, there is site control by Harborlight. There is major neighborhood objection to the project. The site can provide many units, which would be helpful to obtaining ten percent affordable housing in the town. A traffic study would be required as part of the

permitting process. He noted that since there is a senior housing element, perhaps this portion of the project could be constructed in an earlier phase. He noted that there has been concern over the traffic and construction impacts to the schools.

Andrew DeFranza gave the background for the Longmeadow project noting that there have been several meetings on the project. He represents Harborlight, an affordable housing non-profit located in Beverly. Several residents of Hamilton have requested that Harborlight hold off on filing an application until a community process has been completed. They have not filed an application, however they have flagged wetlands and tested the soil.

Mr. Lawrence stated two town boards have stated that 108 units are too many units. Harborlight needs 108 units because the land costs four million dollars. Harborlight cannot do a project with 24 units due to these costs. The site cannot become smaller because one of the land owners owns the road. He believes that the Town could buy down the land by putting in three million dollars, however, he thinks that this is not in the best interest of the Town. Mr. Johnson stated that the Trust should add this issue to their list.

Jake Fiumara questioned what the maximum number of units that could be constructed on the Longmeadow site is. Mr. DeFranza stated that the maximum number of units allowed by DHCD in Hamilton is 200 units. If Harborlight was a for profit developer, this is the number of units they could build on the site. Mr. Wilson stated that he believes that the Planning Board has their process to go through. They should be working on these issues. The chair of the Planning Board should come to the Affordable Housing Trust to talk about how their process is proceeding. The Board of Selectmen and the Affordable Housing Trust can only react to a developer's proposal and not tell the developer how many units they should propose.

Mr. Johnson stated that the Planning Board is only advisory to the Zoning Board of Appeals. It is not the role of the Planning Board to state how many units a project should have. Mr. Britton stated that the Trust's charge is to see if there are other sites that could accommodate affordable units with fewer impacts. Mr. Johnson stated that the number of units should be added to the list of issues. He noted that The Trust has already had a joint meeting with the Planning Board. Perhaps the Planning Board should be invited to one of their meetings. An upcoming step of the process is to coordinate with other town boards.

Russ Tanzer stated that he believes that it is up to Harborlight to figure out the appropriate number of units for their project. Mr. Johnson inquired whether the site is ready to go forward to step 3 and have other town boards review it. It was noted that Mr. Tanzer is an abutter and should recuse himself from speaking as a Trust member regarding the Longmeadow project. Mr. DeFranza stated that he has met with the Planning Board twice. Once was the joint meeting. At both meetings, Harborlight presented plans, but the Planning Board did not comment on the number of units.

Mr. Tanzer moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.