

HAMILTON PLANNING BOARD/AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST
MINUTES OF MEETING
October 20, 2016

Members Present: Peter Clark, Ed Howard, Jeff Melick, Rick Mitchell, Brian Stein, and
Claudia Woods
Peter Britton, Marc Johnson, Bill Wilson, Russ Tanzer (AHT)
Associate Members Present: Richard Boroff and Bill Olsen
Planning Director: Patrick Reffett

This meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm

Jeff Melick announced that one of the goals of the meeting was to find out what the Affordable Housing Trust had been doing to identify potential affordable properties. A broad view of affordable housing potential was more appropriate at this time, according to Mr. Melick. Peter Britton was prepared to review the history of what sites had been analyzed including those that were problematic as well as those that may fit into the suitable basket.

Richard Boroff wanted to know where a potential developer stood at Longmeadow regarding the potential for 108 units and 24 units. Mr. Boroff announced that if only 24 units were considered on the Farnham property, Mr. Miller had said (via a letter) that he would propose 140 affordable units on his parcels. Mr. Britton responded that The Town committees including the Planning Board, Selectmen and Affordable Housing Trust had voted that the proposal at Longmeadow was too large.

According to Peter Britton, the Hamilton Housing Authority was constructed in 1964 and was the last time anything was built, however, Mr. Britton thought that it was likely built by the State Housing Authority.

Peter Britton described Canterbrook as an option but considered the price to be way out of line for Affordable Housing to which Peter Clark added that it was the same price as Longmeadow and recalled that Jack Lawrence had recommended adding two units of affordable units per building to provide more affordable units.

Peter Britton said the Cutler property was not on the market currently but if the legal issues were worked out, it could be considered.

Peter Britton said the COA site could provide family housing as well as senior housing and a consultant had been hired who would be looking at the site to determine the issues. Patrick Reffett said the consultants had met with many stakeholders and would be doing test pits next week. Peter Clark wanted the Town to sponsor the facility so town workers could get priority.

Peter Britton showed a concept plan for Gordon Conwell with 13 available acres.

Peter Britton described the property at 13 Essex St. that included an 11,000 sf house which was for sale for about 3M.

Peter Britton wanted to recommend and support the basket of several properties where smart growth and deliverability were the two most important aspects with deliverable being the most important. Mr. Britton said the importance was to have a project that would feature a shovel in the ground within two years.

According to Peter Britton, 13 Essex St., Gordon Conwell, and the COA were the easiest projects to move forward on as they were the most developable. Marc Johnson added that larger populations of locations should be considered because a private party might be able to work with a host agreement developer. Bill Wilson said he believed there were five properties that should be considered.

Richard Boroff wanted to start with the Longmeadow project because he believed that Mr. Miller intended on moving forward with 140 units. Mr. Boroff said if Mr. Miller went forward, the Town would be stuck with a huge, ugly development without any input from the Town. Peter Clark disagreed and said it would be tied up in court for a long time. Mr. Boroff said he would be able to get it in the ground in two seconds. Peter Britton said the Town had reached out to the State and as a community, the Town wanted to pursue affordable housing and as long as the Town continued to show that the Town had the political will to support affordable housing, the Town would have a good shot at being able to prevent the State from allowing an unfriendly 40B. Richard Boroff wanted to hear legal advice to understand that and the Town was making a huge mistake not supporting the Longmeadow project.

Claudia Woods said the first three choices were the best with the COA being the most challenging and time consuming because of the issues despite the Town owning the property. Jeff Melick agreed with Richard Boroff regarding the letter which was considered leverage but didn't know how significant it might be and wondered if the Town needed someone to help them assess the likelihood of the development coming to pass. Jeff Melick said The Town agreed that 108 units were too many, so the 140 units were way too many. Brian Stein said progress was determined by 12-14 permitted units per year. Peter Britton said the State wanted to see the Town making progress.

Andrew DeFranza said the \$4M price for all three sites would require the minimum of building 100 units but if something else happened with a part of the land, it would be less. Richard Boroff wanted to take the land out of Mr. Farnham's hands because if Mr. Miller were to buy the Farnham parcel, Mr. Miller would be ready to go with a 40B development proposal. Marc Johnson said Mr. DeFranza was just waiting to hear from the Town that they were ready to go.

Jeff Melick said if this property was not part of the 40B with Mr. Farnham's property, Mr. Miller would create his own 40B proposal with 140 units.

Rick Mitchell asked Andrew DeFranza his opinion regarding the legality of overturning the porkchop lot "no further subdivision" notation on the plan and Mr. DeFranza said the lawyers thought it could be done. Mr. DeFranza said once they had a permit, the Town would be in safe harbor. As Harborlight was in control of the Farnham 20 acres, it might prohibit Mr. Miller from filing a 40B.

Marc Johnson said that trying to stop Mr. Miller was the wrong approach because the Town needed more units than just one project. Rick Mitchell agreed with Andrew DeFranza that it was possible to aggregate parcels under one application as long as there was no appeal. Peter Britton said any 40B proposal at Longmeadow would be appealed. Marc Johnson wanted to know if the Planning Board would accept a smaller number of units at Longmeadow. Rick Mitchell stated that the Town was short 200 units and wondered if the Town did 70 units, would the Town get to safe harbor to which Marc Johnson said yes.

Regarding the Longmeadow proposal, Patrick Reffett said there were 20 acres of which five were wet, leaving 15 level, developable acres. Mr. Reffett said test pits had been complete and the property could perc. Mr. Reffett said smart growth meant getting people close to jobs and the abutting property was the high school which was the greatest employer of the town. Out of the 15 acres, 108 units ended up being one unit per 6,000 sf similar to downtown density, according to Mr. Reffett.

Jeff Melick said he thought Longmeadow was a potential project and Richard Boroff agreed because it was just like Ortins Road. Rick Mitchell agreed that it was in play and if done in scale, should be considered. Brian Stein said he never liked the idea of 108 units but 24 on the front parcel was much more appealing. Peter Clark didn't think it would be developable because a lawsuit would prevent it for a long time. Claudia Woods agreed. Bill Olson said if it were the right scale within the right process to be developed, he thought it would be acceptable.

Considering the COA Building, Bill Wilson said seniors were attached to the building and the services provided. There would be senior housing out front and family housing out back. Jeff Melick had a problem due to traffic and congestion concerns. CPA funds could be used because the Town owned the site which would allow for local preference. Rick Mitchell said it would be adjacent to the senior center, be walkable to downtown, and would contribute to the viability to downtown. Claudia Woods asked what the 10 year plan was from the school's perspective. Patrick Reffett responded that there was a newly executed lease with the Town for 10 years for the Winthrop school property. Mr. Reffett had met with the Superintendent and a consultant, regarding the function of the property which was a busy area. They said they could not afford to lose parking. Bill Wilson responded that there were three elementary schools serving the small

sized town which he believed was a lot. If the Town went down to two, the Winthrop School would be a great location for the Town.

Marc Johnson said the parcel was not shovel ready for the Town. Ms Woods noted that the location would provide for smart growth principles. Peter Clark was favorably inclined due to smart growth. Richard Boroff thought there were too few units, the Town couldn't take land away from the school, and the location would interfere with access to police and fire departments. Consultants had been hired to look at the site for access. Brian Stein agreed with the benefit of having the location downtown for a decent number of units being provided for. Bill Olson liked the adjacency with downtown and the master plan for the school would be a part of the decision making process. Mr. Olsen said a traffic study should be done, but adding 40 cars would not create much impact to a state highway.

Gordon Conwell was not a parcel that aligned with smart growth, but affordable would not mean low income so the residents would have cars according to Jeff Melick. Andrew DeFranza said 60% of residents had cars at Turtlecreek, a similar project in Beverly. Mr. Melick was in favor. Rick Mitchell, Brian Stein, and Peter Clark agreed, Claudia Woods said she didn't know enough. Richard Boroff was in favor. Ed Howard had a general statement regarding all sites in that there was a strong limiting factor with septic and each property and their septic constraints should be looked at first not last.

Central Ave. was a small site that would only allow for 4-6 units. It was questioned why more affordable housing would be proposed in a neighborhood where there were already affordable units. Jeff Melick noted that there were 12' wide narrow roads and said he was reluctant to have a project down there as it was so small and congested. Peter Clark suggested entering the site from Highland St. Mr. Melick agreed that it might be possible if access was from Highland but not in favor of access from Central St. Rick Mitchell agreed. Bill Olson passed, Brian Stein said he approved if the Town had control of the Highland St. property. Richard Boroff said yes. Claudia Woods agreed the site was appropriate for Habitat for Humanity.

13 Essex St. was considered by Jeff Melick who said he understood the 17.9 acre site was not downtown being 1.9 miles away but a bus would help. Peter Clark thought the site was very promising in clusters with so much land which made it very suitable. Claudia Woods thought it might be far out of town for families. Richard Boroff liked it. Brian Stein said it was suitable but only if done correctly. Mr. Stein did not want to see a strip of houses but if the old house was kept and the Town was careful with what could be done. Bill Olsen said it was suitable.

Marc Johnson said the plan was to take the Planning Board feedback along with other boards' feedback and go forward with the basket to the Selectmen who would use the host community agreement to see if there was a practical solution.

A neighbor of the Central St. neighborhood indicated that there was a wetland on the end of Western Ave and this property had years of the dumping leaves on it. Rick Fiery said he lived about 10' from the Public Safety Building. Mr. Fiery added that there would be set backs from septic and other restraints but the drawings provided were fantasy for the COA building and that he believed the site couldn't support the number of housing considered. Kate Walker asked the Boards to consider how much these properties would cost.

Motion to adjourn made by Jeff Melick

Seconded by Rick Mitchell

Vote Unanimous to adjourn at 8:45 pm

Prepared by:

Marcie Ricker

Attest

Date