

DRAFT MINUTES  
**Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust**  
September 26, 2016

Members present: Marc Johnson, Peter Britton, Michael Lombardo and Russ Tanzer.

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

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Peter Britton called the meeting to order at 7:40 a.m. He explained that there is a placeholder for the release for sale of Lots 85 and 84, Assessors Map 47, for the upcoming Town Meeting. Marc Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes for the September 14, 2016 meeting. Russ Tanzer seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved, with Michael Lombardo abstaining.

Mr. Britton noted that the Trust had not voted on whether to request the releasing of lots 84 and 85, Assessors Map 47 at Town Meeting. Dorr Fox stated that he had checked with the Town Treasurer and she believes that the lots have not come to Town Meeting for release in the past. There was a discussion regarding lot 31, assessors map 46.

Mr. Britton explained that the Trust will review the sites on their list in relation to the Trust's approved process, with the intent of developing a report that will be presented at Town Meeting along with their warrant article.

#### SENIOR CENTER (COA BUILDING) SITE

Mr. Johnson explained the approved process. He also explained the issues that would be reviewed.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the Step 2 Analysis for the Council on Aging Building/Senior Center site. He noted that there would be a visual impact on Bay Road. The project would require a comprehensive permit. The site appears to have adequate uplands for septic, however would require Board of Health review. The site is complicated due to the other municipal uses on site and may need to be subdivided off. Costs to the Town are unknown due to development costs. Since there is a bond on the buildings on the site, there may be limitations. There are traffic issues near the site and a traffic study would be likely. Town Meeting approval may be required. The site has the capability of meeting Affordable Housing Trust goals through increasing affordable housing significantly. Sponsorship of the project is unknown.

Mr. Lombardo stated that it would be complex to develop this site. Mr. Britton stated that the consultant will weigh in on the issues. Mr. Lombardo stated that it would be good to start a conversation with the school committee. He also noted that the consultant is reviewing the contract. Russ Tanzer stated that there are traffic

issues. Mr. Lombardo stated that he will look into the bond issue. Mr. Britton stated that it is time to construct housing for seniors. The site represents smart growth.

Betsey Harper inquired whether the housing would be limited to seniors. The Trust noted that while this issue has not been determined, the state advocates for housing for both seniors and families.

David Bianco inquired whether there was the ability to reduce taxes for seniors. Mr. Lombardo stated that the Town did not have authority to reduce taxes. Mary Beth Lawton stated that it was against the law to give any one class a tax exemption, including seniors.

Bill Shields stated the consultant will have a lot to say about the issues for the town-owned properties. He is hoping that the Trust will be involved with guiding the consultant. He believes that the perspective of the consultant is important and should be positive to try to make the property work for affordable housing. He believes that it should be a public process. Mr. Lombardo explained the scope of services for the consultant. He explained that the consultant will work with staff. Ms. Harper inquired whether the consultant will complete environmental and traffic studies. Mr. Lombardo explained that there would be studies, however they would be limited.

Ms. Lawton noted that parking is an important issue for the site. Mr. Johnson concurred with this addition.

Jake Fiumara stated that the meeting was being held at an inconvenient time for people to attend. He noted that the Affordable Housing Trust is acting as a developer. The Town should determine whether the land can be sold. Mr. Britton stated that the Town was developing a host community agreement. Mr. Fiumara believes that the market should determine what can be done on the site. He believes that the Trust should be careful at scoring and evaluating sites.

Deb Safford inquired why Longmeadow was not a priority. Mr. Johnson noted that Longmeadow was covered at the last meeting. Ms. Safford noted that Bill Wilson had requested that a member of the Planning Board should attend a Trust meeting. Mr. Fox explained that the chair of the Planning Board was invited to the meeting but could not attend. Mr. Johnson explained how the list of properties was developed. Ms. Safford stated she believes that it is unusual to ask an organization to sign a host community agreement, but also ask them to delay developing their project. She believes that private properties should not be on the list.

Betty Gray inquired why the Trust developed architectural plans for the Senior Center site. Mr. Britton explained that the plans were not developed for the Trust, but his own personal visualization.

## SITE LOCATED BEHIND THE PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

Mr. Johnson reviewed the issues for the site. He noted that a project on the site would have visual impact to neighbors on Locust Street, Carriage Lane, Horseshoe Lane and Plum Court. The project would require a comprehensive permit. The site appears to have adequate uplands for septic, however, would require Board of Health review. The development of the site is complicated by the other Town uses on the site as well as the bond issue. There would be traffic issues. There may be a need for a traffic study. The project could impact Trust goals by accommodating enough housing for one year of the Housing Production Plan goals. There would be development costs. Mr. Lombardo stated that there are several underground issues when developing this site. Mr. Johnson noted that the sponsorship is unknown. The Town Meeting may need to be involved regarding the development of the site. Mr. Lombardo noted that access may not be possible through Carriage Lane. Mr. Tanzer stated that the issues that have been identified can be worked out jointly with the Senior Center site.

Donald Harper stated that as a senior he would like to have an apartment that is located within town, which allowed him to walk and not have a car. Mr. Britton noted that the railroad station gives the Town options for smart growth.

Mr. Lawton stated the construction impacts on the site would impact the Council on Aging operations. A project on the senior center site would impact Council on Aging operations because they would not have a building during the construction period, if the building was torn down and reconstructed. Their programming would be eliminated during that period. She noted that parking would also be an issue.

## CUTLER-RICH PROPERTY

Mr. Johnson noted that when the Trust commenced its review of the property, it was for sale. It has since been taken off the market, however, **and he asked whether** the Trust **should** continue its review. Members of the audience questioned whether the Trust should move forward with its review. The Trust decided to move forward, and review the site.

Mr. Johnson stated that there would be a visual impact to neighbors on Maple Street, Hatfield Road and Porter Lane. There would also be a traffic impact. The project would require a comprehensive permit. The site has a lot of wetlands. The site would need to be reviewed by Natural Heritage due to endangered species. There is also a wetland crossing. Development of the property could be complex due to neighborhood opposition and that the property is currently not for sale. There are traffic impacts and a traffic study may be required. The site could meet Trust goals if a larger project could be constructed. There is low cost to the Town, since it is a private property, unless there is a CPA funding request.

Mr. Lombardo stated that the Blue Spotted Salamander issue should be strongly considered. Mr. Britton stated that he did not think it was an issue. Mr. Fox noted that there are two certified vernal pools on the site and that the Natural Heritage

review may significantly limit development on the site. Mr. Johnson stated that resolution of the endangered species issue should fall to the land owner and not the Town. He believes that since the site is no longer for sale and there are environmental issues, there is a timing issue. The Trust should lower the site on the priority list.

Mr. Harper stated that there are water table issues. A development would create water runoff issues. Mr. Bianco inquired how a development would impact Porter Lane and Cunningham Drive. Ed McCarthy inquired about the goal of building fourteen affordable units per year. Mr. Johnson stated that it allows the Town to have a safe harbor from projects developed under Chapter 40B MGL. Mr. McCarthy stated that smaller projects would create fewer objections from neighbors.

#### GORDON CONWELL SEMINARY SITE

Mr. Johnson reviewed the issues associated with the site. He noted that there would be a moderate visual and traffic impact. The project would require a comprehensive permit. The property appears to have adequate uplands for septic, however, Board of Health review would be required. Hopefully the project would pay taxes and not be exempt as a non-profit. The project has the potential to provide several affordable units. There would be few costs to the Town, unless they request CPA funding. Mr. Lombardo stated that with the ledge issues, the site may only be able to allow for fifteen or twenty units. Mr. Johnson has noted that there is no identified developer at this time. Mr. Britton noted that Gordon-Conwell is obtaining an appraisal of the property.

#### 13 ESSEX STREET

It was noted that the site was a single family home. There is a conservation restriction on a portion of the site. A development would have a moderate visual impact. The project would require a comprehensive permit. The site appears to have adequate upland. The site is privately owned. Mr. Johnson stated that the project would not be complex and there would be minimal traffic impacts. Mr. Tanzer stated several affordable units could be constructed on the site. There would be no financial impact on the Town. There is no sponsor for the project at this time. There was a question regarding how many units could be built on the site. Mr. Britton noted that they do not know at this time.

Bob Gray complimented the Trust for being serious about creating affordable housing in the Town. Mr. Shields stated that it is good to plan for affordable housing instead of having it shoved onto you. It is best to have housing for seniors that follow smart growth principles. Mr. Gray noted that affordable housing is intended for everyday people, not riff-raff.

Mr. Johnson moved to send the Longmeadow project, the Council on Aging site, the Public Safety Building site, the Central Avenue site, the Gordon Conwell site and the 13 Essex Street site to step 3 of the process where other boards will give comments to the Affordable Housing Trust; the Cutler-Rich site will not be sent to the next

step; the Central Avenue site will be sent to Town Meeting to request approval to sell the site; and residents abutting the Central Avenue site will be given a courtesy notice for the next Trust meeting. Mr. Britton seconded the motion. Mr. Shields noted that town boards have voted not to support the Longmeadow project and therefore it should be taken off the list of projects going forward. **Mr. Johnson stated that the board votes were specific to a 108 unit project at Longmeadow.** There was further discussion of the Longmeadow project. There was discussion concerning the affordable housing goals for the Town. There was a discussion on the affordable housing units for the Carriage House Junction project. There was a discussion on the Central Avenue site. A vote was taken on the motion and it was unanimously approved.

#### HAHT BUDGET

There was a short discussion on the budget of the Affordable Housing Trust.

#### NEW BUSINESS

The Trust decided to hold their next meeting on October 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. They will hold another meeting on October 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Britton moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 a.m. Mr. Tanzer seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.