

Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust

Minutes

Sept. 11, 2014

Welcome – Chairman David Carey opened the meeting of the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust (Trust). Members Michael Lombardo, Marc Johnson, Peter Britton, Brian Stein were present. Also present were Mary Beth Lawton, Council on Aging, and Kristine Cheetham, Planning Coordinator.

Agenda Items

Inclusionary Zoning – Jill Mann, attorney for the Canterbrook Estates senior housing project presented her letter to the Trust. She asked for the Trust to review, discuss and hopefully provide an advisory letter to the Planning Board relative to a payment in lieu of affordable housing units on site according to the inclusionary zoning bylaws. The letter submitted to the Trust is dated Sept. 2, 2014. She explained that the affordable housing policies do not work well for projects with age restrictions because of the income limits, asset limits and overall financial status of the market rate units at the site. The members of the Trust reviewed her letter and the financial considerations she presented.

ACTION: M. Lombardo made a motion the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust forward an advisory letter that recommends the Canterbrook Senior Housing project submit a payment in lieu of units on site based on the formula in the town zoning bylaws. D. Carey seconded the motion.

Discussion:

P. Britton felt that the on site creation of one or two units that would also require monitoring and management that may be cumbersome for the other homeowners. He felt that the town might have more success working with affordable housing partners to create more units of housing and ones that could be professionally managed.

MB. Lawton confirmed that the contribution would be \$406,000 and concurred that the payment in lieu of units was recommended at this time. As the Director of the Council on Aging she was very familiar with the financial presentation.

M. Johnson stated that he originally hoped for a creative modification to the project; such as rentals for the affordable on site or some form of town ownership. However, he also came to the conclusion that the numbers and management issues still did not work to qualify seniors.

M. Lombardo felt that the Trust was in a better position to leverage additional funds with the payment in lieu of funds to seek out a larger project for the community.

D. Carey added that the Town isn't in a position to develop or manage units and will need to secure partners. He also felt that the the potential for investing or leveraging the funds to create more units outweighed the benefit of one or two units on this site that may not be financially feasible.

B. Stein concurred with the Trust and added that he was hopeful that some units may be created in the downtown.

M. Johnson finished the discussion by adding that the rationale for this decision should be shared with the Planning Board. He noted that the Trust agreed with the logic presented by the applicant and the overall difficulty with financing affordable units for seniors. The members also felt that the funds could be used more efficiently by the Trust to address affordable housing in town.

VOTE: All voted in favor of the recommendation to the Planning Board.

General Discussion

1. Grants Program – K. Cheetham informed the Trust that she was in receipt of a memo from the Dept. of Revenue via town counsel that questioned the validity of the grant program. She offered to review the initial research on the other communities with these programs. In addition, she shared the legal interpretation with the staff at the Mass Housing Partnership as they endeavor to provide a new guidebook for municipal housing trusts. The MHP will follow up with recommendations.
2. Housing Opportunities – The Trust discussed their hopes to complete affordable housing projects in the future such as a single home with Habitat for Humanity, some rental housing in the downtown, and a large project at a suitable location within the community.
3. Legal Matters – K. Cheetham was reviewing the operating bylaws of a few other municipal trusts so that the Hamilton Trust could further define the method for using funds such as inclusionary payments.

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, October 2, 2014 8:00 AM

Adjourn – At 8:30 AM M. Lombardo made a motion to adjourn. D. Carey seconded. All voted in favor.