

# Lenox Affordable Housing Committee

March 10, 2008

## Minutes

Members present: Dave Klausemeyer (DK), Chair, Theresa Ahrens (TA), Jo Anne Magee (JM), Olga Weiss (OW), Roscoe Sandlin (RS) and Kate McNulty-Vaughan (KV).

Also in attendance: Mary Albertson (MA), Town Planner.

DK opened the meeting at 5:15 PM. RS made a motion to approve and OW seconded. Minutes approved by the majority.

DK introduced Stuart Beckley and Amy Petrone. Stuart and Amy are serving as the town's Peer to Peer consultant for the Planned Production Plan. Stuart thanked the committee for inviting them to serve as the town's peer. He noted that they have reviewed the charts and the housing options prepared by the sub-committee. He said the information is solid and the housing options are impressive. The town is taking a proactive and positive approach to addressing its affordable housing needs. He finds the concept of employer housing very interesting. He noted that the town needs to be realistic about creating the required 18 units per year. It appears from a review of the building permits for new construction that the creation of additional affordable units is not within the current development pattern. Members discussed the building permit table and found that the number of single family permits per year ranged from 30 units in 2001 to 11 units in 2007 and an average would be 20 permits per year. It is difficult to create an additional 18 units for affordable housing when the town is only issuing an average of 20 single family permits per year. The additional units cannot be absorbed in the current development pattern.

Stuart suggested that the town should look at providing rehabilitation funds in exchange for 15 year deed restrictions. The town can count the units toward the 10% because of the 15 year deed restriction. MA noted that the town does not participate in rehabilitation program but the town could partner with Berkshire Housing or the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to obtain rehabilitation money.

Stuart explained that 40R might be an option but the town would need to commit to a minimum 8 unit per acre single family density and 20 unit per acre multi-family density standard and this must be by-right.

He suggested that since the town has CPA – the town could establish a housing trust fund and be in a good position to purchase deed restrictions for existing units. He suggested that if the trust fund is established the town could prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP) to generate interest. Establishing a trust fund is a very wise move because it gives the town the ability to act quickly on a good project.

Stuart agreed that the Bolton example was a good format for Lenox. It is straightforward and easy to understand.

Members asked Stuart to comment on the concept of working with neighboring communities to create affordable housing. They asked if he knew of an example of a regional effort resulting in a community being allowed to count units physically located in another community. He said that the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) tried this approach. The City of Holyoke meets its 10% requirement and was willing to allow other communities to fund new affordable units to be located in Holyoke but counted by another community. The PVPC was not able to find a way to bring this concept to fruition.

Members asked for examples of action items that actually result in new units.

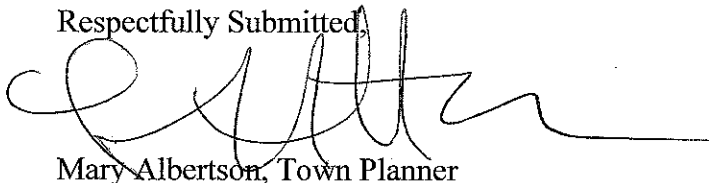
Stuart suggested:

1. A good friendly 40B project.
2. Use CPA funds to buy land for an affordable housing project and prepare an RFP for a project developer.
3. Establish a Housing Trust Fund (CPA funded) to buy deed restrictions.
4. Participate in a Housing Rehabilitation program that includes a deed restriction so the units can be counted.

Stuart and Amy agreed to forward a draft action plan by March 31. MA will distribute the draft plan at the March 31 meeting. The sub-committee will meet to finalize the Guiding Principles section.

Meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Albertson', written over a horizontal line.

Mary Albertson, Town Planner

Approved: