

ACCEPT as WRITTEN
: Ellen
: Debbie
O.K.

**Town of Lenox
Affordable Housing Committee/Trust
June 2, 2014 at 4pm
Land Use Meeting Room**

Minutes of 6/2/2014

Members present: Debbie Burke (DB); Ellen Jacobson (EJ); Kate McNulty-Vaughan, KMV; Olga Weiss (OW)

Members Absent: Joanne Magee (JAM); Jackie McNinch (JM) – both with prior notification

Staff present: None

Meeting documents: June 2, 2014 Agenda

Ellen Jacobson chaired the meeting, and DB volunteered to take Minutes. A quorum of the Committee/Trust was present.

Minutes:

KMV moved to postpone Minutes for the previous meeting (May 19, 2014); DB seconded the motion to postpone, and members voted 4-0 in favor of the postponement since Minutes were not yet available.

Sub-Committee reports:

Public Relations:

EJ will contact Town Clerk/Treas. Claudie Duby about putting information about the Home Buyer Grant Program on the Town of Lenox Facebook page. She noted that retired Planner Mary Albertson's name is still listed as the "contact" on the Affordable Housing section and will also have Claudie fix that.

EJ also indicated that she would do some research into what activities other communities do to increase community support for their programs. EJ mentioned that she and KMV would be attending the Housing Institute on June 11th – also a good source for ideas and an opportunity to attend a session led by Kevin McLaughlin (ownership housing project in Wayland) whom she had heard at a previous Housing Institute. She noted that that housing development had sold out immediately and units are now up for resale.

This prompted a discussion of the relative ease -- or difficulty -- of the sale of deed-restricted units. EJ, who disagrees with JM's position, that "no bank" is interested in dealing with deed-restricted units, offered to put together a "pros and cons" sheet based on arguments she's seen on other community affordable housing websites. OW suggested that the target for deed-restricted units might be those in a "holding" position, as interim housing until a prospective owner can buy into the regular market. DB remarked that there will always be folks who will never have enough money for a mortgage, whose options would be deed-restricted ownership or rental housing.

Members expressed a need to understand more about JM's certainty about the banking community's reluctance to do mortgages for deed-restricted units, especially since, as DB pointed out, housing affordability is a social and government concern.

Home Buyer Grant Program:

KMV related that Town Mgr. Chris Ketchen had passed on the news that the 2nd Home Buyer grant paperwork was underway and the closing was scheduled for June 26. She also noted that she and

JAM had included a section on the Home Buyer Grant Program in the new Implementation Strategies Section updated for DHCD review, even though this program has no effect on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) count for Lenox, offering only an attempt at showing progress on affordability in a difficult market.

Sawmill Brook:

a. Special Town Meeting on June 24:

KMV reminded members of the date, time, and place of this meeting, whose purpose is to follow up the Designated Developer Agreement by giving the DD the “option to purchase” by a 2/3 vote (if passed). DB indicated that the Town Mgr. and BOS are viewing this action as the next step of the previously signed agreement.

b. What action is recommended:

EJ asked about actions the Committee/Trust members could take. DB suggested individual contact to build participation in this Town Meeting, and discussed various segments of the town and earlier support – town committees, Trinity Parish, neighbors, Kimball Farm residents, etc. – that could be called upon to attend and vote. KMV promised to scan and send the rewritten background information sheet for Article 14 (ATM 2011 vote to purchase Bartoni property) to members as a “refresher” on the project details.

The Committee discussed and decided that holding a Q. & A. session for the public was a worthy idea, but could raise more questions about affordable housing not relevant to the upcoming vote, and settled instead on other ideas for voter information and contact: each member talking to 10 people; OW passing on information on the Special Tn. Mtg. at a Lenox Club Round Table discussion; EJ talking to a Housing Authority meeting and Curtis residents.

Next Meeting: Monday, June 16th at 4pm

The Committee scheduled another meeting prior to the June 24th Special Town Meeting vote on the Sawmill Brook development. OW volunteered to chair and prepare and post the agenda.

OW moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by DB. Members voted (4-0) to adjourn at 5pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate McNulty-Vaughan