

WAYLAND HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Minutes – February 10, 2014

Submitted by Rachel G. Bratt

Approved May 6, 2014

Attending: Mary Antes, Kathy Boundy, Rachel Bratt, Chris DiBona, Pat Harlan, Fred Moser, Armine Roat, and Betty Salzberg.

1. Our meeting had been posted to begin at 6:30 so we could attend the continued hearing of the Planning Board on the housing trust article. However, at the last minute it was announced that that meeting would not start until 7:30, so the Housing Partnership meeting was brought to order at our regular meeting time, 7:45.
2. We welcomed our new member, Chris DiBona, and she briefly introduced herself.
3. Becky Stanizzi from the Economic Development Committee made a presentation about the proposed River's Edge housing development on route 20. She described that at last year's Town Meeting the project failed by only 7 votes. Also, she explained how the project had changed from last year's proposal to this year's. Notably, fewer units, overall, are being proposed (150-190, compared with 216 last year) and fewer age-restricted units are being proposed (a minimum of 25% compared with 67% last year). Also, the four-story portion of the development will be in the back of the lot, with the lower rise sections closer to Route 20. Additional conversation noted that there would be 3 affordable units with 3 bedrooms; the remainder of the units would have 1 or 2 bedrooms. All units would be rental and therefore all would count as affordable housing, according to the way the state credits rental housing-- all are counted in the Subsidized Housing Inventory. While the development would bring us much closer to attaining the 10% affordable housing goal, as mandated by the state, even with the upper limit of 190 additional units, we would still fall short.
4. Much of the discussion revolved around the proximity of the proposed housing to the Sudbury cell tower and the potential for additional cell towers to be built in Sudbury. The proposed housing, at its closest point, would be only 150 feet from the Sudbury tower. Wayland has a statute saying that no cell tower can be built within 900 feet of existing housing. Members questioned the logic of new housing being located within 900 feet of an existing tower. Becky explained that there is no hard evidence of there being adverse health impacts of cell towers at the distance being proposed for the new housing and that, moreover, there is radiation all around us—from our phones, wi-fi, and microwaves. Becky feels that the 900 foot requirement in our statute would not hold up with the FCC, if it were contested in court.
5. Becky also emphasized that even with the new housing being developed, 3 viable sites for cell towers would still be available within Wayland's cell tower district. Finally, any remediation of the site, in terms of toxic chemicals, would be done by the developer.

6. After Becky left, Fred questioned whether the housing could be sited farther away from the Sudbury cell tower. Rachel said she would send an email to Becky with that question. A straw poll indicated general support for the housing, but a range of concerns about the proximity of the proposed housing to the cell tower.
7. Mary moved approval of minutes, as corrected, from meeting on January 13, 2013. Kathy seconded. Minutes unanimously approved.
8. There was discussion of the housing trust issue and the various versions proposed by the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board. Betty moved that the Housing Partnership support the Town's adoption of the state Housing Trust law, as-is. Seconded by Pat. Unanimous vote in favor.
9. If modifications to the state Housing Trust law are made by the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen, there was a strong sentiment on the part of Housing Partnership members that the Trust should not have to go back to Town Meeting for approvals, since that would handicap the work of the Trust. A suggestion made at the Planning Board hearing on February 4, which would give the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen the authority to review projects of more than 2 units, met with general approval; far better than the need for a Town Meeting vote, since meeting with the Town boards can occur quickly.
10. Concerning the transfer of land to the Recreation Commission, members were supportive of modifying the proposed Board of Selectmen article to assure that some portion of the land would be held back until housing units are purchased for affordable, whether or not in the Dudley area. Members were not happy with the provision, currently in the proposed article, which would release all the property to Recreation so long as money is appropriated, whether or not actual affordable housing is purchased.
11. There was a brief discussion of the Town's accessory apartment by-law. Mary reported that she has been working with Jackie DuCharme, another member of the Housing Authority, to modify the by-law. There is a feeling that requiring a unit to stay affordable for 10 years may be too long, following the creation of an accessory apartment, under the affordable housing part of the by-law; perhaps 5 years would be sufficient. This conversation will be continued at a meeting on March 3; Mary will announce it.
12. Pat mentioned that she had information available about signing up to work on the Habitat project. Work will take place on Thursdays and Saturdays. Foundation work has begun.
13. Betty moved to adjourn at 9:50; Kathy seconded.

Next meeting: Monday March 10, 7:45 pm