

WAYLAND HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Minutes – September 30, 2014

Submitted by Rachel G. Bratt

Approved November 18, 2014

Attending: Mary Antes, Chris DiBona, Kathy Boundy, Rachel Bratt, Pat Harlan, Marty Nichols, Armine Roat, and Betty Salzberg

Also present: residents: Mary Barber, Keith Barber, School Street; Betsy Brigham, Rice Road; George Bernard, E. Plain St.

At 7:48, Rachel called the meeting to order.

Since several residents were in attendance, she indicated that she would change the agenda to allow for the discussion of the Covered Bridge proposal to come first. She asked for public comment. Each resident spoke and the following represents the major points that were made.

- Traffic at the Street location is a big problem; it is not a safe intersection and adding more units is not a good idea.
- It doesn't seem right or fair for the Planning Board to approve a site plan with on-site affordable housing, and then to reverse that.
- Units should be included on-site; Sage Hill is a great example of how the Inclusionary By Law is meant to work. Why can't the affordable units be placed on-site?
- There don't seem to be any extenuating circumstances that preclude on-site development.
- Lower income people would also enjoy the Covered Bridge location's outdoor space. Putting the affordable units there would promote diversity across the Town.
- If off-site housing is to be built, it should be spread across the whole town, which is what the Inclusionary By Law intends.
- The Cochituate area already has something like 83% of all the affordable housing in Town (according to Sarki Sarkissian). It is important to spread it around.
- The proposed units would not be like those at Covered Bridge; the units are supposed to be comparable.
- Neighbors have not gotten notification about the specifics of the proposed units. It would be premature for the Planning Board to vote on a proposal that neighbors have not had sufficient opportunity to discuss and weigh in on.
- Need to better understand the wetlands issue.
- Approving this proposal would set a bad precedent.

Mary commented on the Housing Authority's concerns about the Covered Bridge proposal. She has some concern about whether the homeowner association fees would be a problem for affordable housing residents; these fees are problem in other developments in Town. The WHA also believes that there should be 2 off-site units required for every 1 on-site unit mandated by the By-Law.

Betty emphasized that wetland and all other environmental rules must be complied with. The Conservation Commission has not yet seen the proposal for units to be built at the School Street location.

Mary noted that at the Selectmen's meeting the night before, the traffic problems with the intersection were discussed. There is a possibility that the E. Plain road in front of the Villa may be closed to Eastbound traffic. This would increase congestion in front of the School Street property. "This is the worst location for new affordable housing."

Marty noted that he thought the Planning Board's guidelines gave the PB some leeway in making judgments about whether to accept an off-site proposal, in lieu of on-site development. He said that the Planning Board could approve off-site units if this decision was in the best interest of the Town and that therefore it was important to demonstrate that this proposal was not in the best interests of the Town.

The WHP reviewed a draft of a letter to be sent to the Planning Board, which Rachel had written, based on a draft letter that they are working on, to be sent to the PB. Members felt that the letter should emphasize that the affordable should be located on-site, in a better location than originally proposed by the developers. But, if the Planning Board chooses to accept the off-site proposal, they should require 2 off-site units for every 1 required on-site. In addition, the PB should carefully assess issues related to traffic and wetlands problems connected to the School Street site.

Marty moved that: The WHP oppose the most recent Covered Bridge proposal presented by Devens Hamlen and Ben Stevenson, and that is being considered by the Planning Board. The reasons, which reflect the WHP's discussion of this evening, will be outlined in a letter to be sent to the Planning Board, prior to their meeting on October 14. Kathy seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

Pat moved to accept the minutes of June 3; Armine seconded. Accepted by the 5 members in attendance: Rachel, Chris, Pat, Armine and Betty.

Kathy offered a correction to the minutes of Aug. 21. Marty moved that they be accepted, as corrected; Mary seconded. Unanimously approved.

Armine provided a brief update on the Housing Trust Committee's first meeting. Mark Lanza, Town Counsel, reviewed the various documents. This conversation will be continued at the next meeting, Oct. 8.

Chris had just come from the first River's Edge meeting. An RFP went out for legal representation for this project. Nine proposals were received and will be reviewed by committee members. Their next meeting is Oct. 14. It is unlikely that a proposal will be ready by Town Meeting.

Mary noted that the Habitat project is moving slowly. All 4 families have been selected; each family is connecting with 2 volunteers who are helping them move toward the transition to homeownership. They will also be attending a workshop held by an outside consultant on budgeting, maintenance, etc. Mary expressed continued frustration at the slow pace of construction. It seems that volunteers are accommodated much too slowly; people who want to work, should be able to do that. The houses likely will not be completed by January 2016.

Mary also commented about a poster done by a Massachusetts child living in assisted housing, that will appear in NAHRO's national calendar, about what her home means to her.

Next meeting set for November 18 at 7:45; Kathy moved to adjourn at 9:20; seconded by Marty