

WAYLAND HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Minutes – November 17, 2015

Submitted by Rachel G. Bratt

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

Guests: 2 residents from 89 Oxbow: Lina Russo and Margot Stitham
Jennifer Steel

At 7:50 Rachel called the meeting to order.

Jennifer Steel is interested in being appointed as the Housing Partnership's representative to the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust. She shared a bit about her background – she is the Senior Environmental Planner for the City of Newton. She has also served on a number of committees in town. Members provided some information about our committee and the interests we represent. We agreed to vote on this appointment at the end of the meeting.

The discussion then turned to a question that came up at the prior meeting, which had been raised by Armine: owners of homes at 89 Oxbow Road are concerned about increases in their property taxes and the possibility that some people may need to move if costs keep rising. Armine presented data showing that while the assessments at 89 Oxbow have been going up, the assessments for some of the other deed restricted homeownership units elsewhere in town have actually been going down. In addition, Lina Russo mentioned that several other towns, including Newton and Wellesely, have created mechanisms to keep tax bills low for the deed-restricted units. Jennifer volunteered to find out what she can about the Newton initiative. Several years ago, Lina had written a letter to prior Town Administrator, Fred Turkington, about this issue and his response was that the town was doing all that it can for these homeowners. Members agreed that a good next step would be to meet with Ellen Brideau, the assessor, to further discuss these issues. Mary, Marty, Kathy, Armine and Rachel will all try to attend that meeting and, perhaps, one or more of the other 89 Oxbow neighbors. Mary mentioned that articles for the spring Town Meeting would need to be submitted by January 15.

Rachel announced that Rev. Dr. Stephanie May, minister at the First Parish Unitarian Church, will be the Clergy Association's representative to the Housing Partnership. She was not able to attend tonight's meeting, but Rachel said she had arranged to meet with her on November 19 to provide background about the Housing Partnership.

The ribbon-cutting for the first two Habitat homes will take place on Sat. Dec. 5, noon to 5:00 pm, although it is unlikely that the families will move in before Christmas.

Mary mentioned that the meeting of the combined housing groups will take place on Thursday, Dec. 3 at 7:30. All members were encouraged to attend. Among the agenda items will be a follow-up to the joint meeting held in January 2014. Three housing working groups had been formed: The Visions group, chaired by Katherine Provost has completed a draft report. The major need is for rental housing with at least 2 bedrooms. Sarki's group on zoning still has not yet met. Brian's group on monitoring has met once but Rachel has not heard from him. Another issue to be discussed is whether we should try to hold a meeting with several other MetroWest communities, with Rep. Kevin Honan, who is sponsoring several bills

related to zoning for multifamily housing. Marty asked for more information about these bills; Rachel said she would send the links.

Chris reported that the River's Edge committee would start reviewing proposals in December, with the expectation that all qualified applicants would be interviewed. Rachel mentioned that she had met both with the River's Edge Advisory Committee and with the Board of Selectmen concerning the language in the Housing Production Report, currently being revised by Sarki. Specifically, she raised the point that the town is directed to set aside 50% of the units as affordable, if a town-owned parcel is being sold and developed for housing. Unfortunately, the Housing Production Report has not yet been approved and the warrant article that had been approved in spring 2014 which directed the use of the River's Edge property only prescribed the need for 25% of the units to be set aside as affordable. Members agreed that it would have been good if we had raised this issue earlier. But, on the other hand, would Town Meeting have approved a rental development with as much as 50% of the units set aside as affordable? In any case, for the moment, it is clear that it is too late to re-set the guidelines for the affordable units at River's Edge. Hopefully, at least some of the proposals will include more than the minimum required affordable housing and/or target households at less than 80% of area median income.

Several corrections to the minutes were offered. Kathy moved to approve the minutes, as corrected; Betty seconded. Unanimously approved.

Mary moved that we appoint Jennifer Steel as the Housing Partnership's representative to the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust. Seconded by Pat. Unanimous approval.

Next meeting: Tuesday January 12, 7:45, 2016

At 9:20 Marty made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mary.