

WAYLAND HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Minutes – September 13, 2016

Submitted by Rachel G. Bratt

Attending: Mary Antes, Joanne Barnett, Kathy Boundy, Rachel Bratt, Chris Di Bona, Pat Harlan, Stephanie May, Marty Nichols Armine Roat

Also attending, Jennifer Steel, WHP representative to Municipal Affordable Housing Trust; developer Steven Zieff; and about 18 Wayland residents

At 7:35 Rachel called the meeting to order.

Rachel welcomed new member, Joanne Barnett, new representative from Conservation Commission. She also expressed thanks to Betty Salzberg for her prior service in this role. All members of the Housing Partnership briefly introduced themselves.

Rachel provided a short overview of the Chapter 40B state statute. She answered a few questions posed by residents.

Brookside Development, Mahoney's site on Route 20: Developer Steven Zieff provided more detail concerning where his proposed plan is, in terms of the approval process. He is waiting for a Project Eligibility Letter to be provided by MassHousing, which would detail the need for him to fulfill a number of specific requirements, prior to being granted a comprehensive permit under 40B. This is the first step of the process; the second step involves him submitting his final plan, showing how his project will comply with the various stipulated requirements. He hopes to file the paperwork for the comprehensive permit before the end of 2016.

Mr. Zieff presented and discussed a series of conceptual drawings, which, he believes, shows that the project is viable. Some key points that he made:

- 1) He believes that his plan will restore the site to a more natural state.
- 2) Certain uses of land are exempt from Town Zoning, under Chapter 40A. The Mahoney's site is considered an agricultural use. The use of the Mahoney's site for agricultural purposes pre-dates Wayland's adoption of its zoning ordinance.
- 3) 3 homes could (likely) be built "as of right" under the Town's zoning, but a mid-rise (3-4 story) apartment complex with some 60 units, could be built through the Chapter 40B process.
- 4) The anticipated cost of the land would be something over \$2 million. This means that simply placing 3 units on the site would not be financially feasible.
- 5) Parking would be under the building; likely about 1.6 spaces/unit. Some guest parking would likely be above-ground.
- 6) Septic facility would be under the surface parking level.
- 7) He believes that what he is proposing would be considered renovation or rehabilitation of the existing structures, not new construction. However, Joanne Barnett said that she believed the Conservation Commission would view this as new construction. This has major implications, it would seem, for the viability of the project, since various wetland rules would not be waived if it is deemed new construction. Conservation Commission approval is needed for the project to get a Chapter 40B permit. This part of the process would occur after the Project Eligibility letter is received from MassHousing.
- 8) Concerning number of 1-2-3 bedroom units, Mr. Zieff indicated that, under state law, at least 10% of the units would need to have 3-BRs. For his anticipated project, 6 units, with at least

2, he indicated, being affordable. WHP members indicated their interest in seeing more affordable units with 3 BRs. Mr. Zieff indicated that one of the constraints relates to septic/wastewater issues, since those relate directly to the number of bedrooms in the development. Ideally, he indicated that he would like to offer a full range of units, 1, 2 and 3- BRs with and without dens, thereby appealing to a broad market.

- 9) The 40B units would be affordable to households @ 80% or less of area median income. Mr. Zieff pointed out that market rate rentals, which he estimates to be around \$2400-2600/month, is not terribly different from rentals @ 80% AMI.
- 10) Mr. Zieff indicated that he would incorporate community space into the development, even if it means that he would need to eliminate 1-2 apartments to accommodate that. Housing Partnership members, particularly Stephanie May, underscored the importance of dedicated community and indoor and outdoor recreational space for families.
- 11) Mr. Zieff agreed that it is important for the interior finishes of the affordable and market rate units to be virtually identical. Housing Partnership members also noted the importance of the affordable and market rate units being interspersed throughout the development.
- 12) Mr. Zieff mentioned that the fire chief says he does not have the needed equipment to reach a 4-story building and that additional apparatus would be needed. However, Mr. Zieff also pointed out that his new building would be safer, in terms of fire protection, than most single family homes.
- 13) Egress of the building would, ideally, face Rich Valley Road.

Some of the concerns expressed by residents included:

- 1) Does the proposed development comply with Section 74 of the 40B statute that calls for the design of the development being consistent with the local area? None of the residential structures are 4 stories high.
- 2) How would the development impact traffic? Mr. Zieff said that he thought additional traffic load would be minimal, but that a formal traffic study would need to be done.
- 3) While they agreed that the conversation with Mr. Zieff was "civil" they did not want him to misinterpret that as being supportive of the proposal.

Rachel concluded this portion of the meeting saying that the residents would have many additional opportunities to weigh in on the proposal as it continues to be reviewed by Town boards and committees. She also noted that a study that students of hers had completed when she was at Tufts concluded that key concerns about 40B developments that had been raised prior to their construction, did not materialize several years after the developments were completed.

Mr. Zieff and residents left the meeting.

Housing Partnership members de-briefed the meeting. Marty underscored that if we want our concerns to be heard about bedroom size of affordable units, the development being generally supportive of family living, and amenities being built into the development from the start (not being an after-thought) etc. that we should be sure to attend ZBA meetings.

Rachel asked if anyone wanted to write a letter, to be sent to BOS, summarizing our concerns. Without volunteers, she offered to do so and send it around for WHP comments.

Members felt that we should make the following points:

- More deeply affordable units – units affordable at less than 80% AMI.
- More large bedroom units among the affordable units

- Dedicated indoor and outdoor community/recreational space that will be supportive to family living.
- Development should not be age-restricted.
- Suggest that the developer set aside some money to cover future monitoring costs of the development and that the monitoring agent should be a local one, such as the Wayland Housing Authority.
- Our letter will not reference concerns that are in the domain of other commissions, such as Conservation and Historical.

Approve minutes from June 14 – Stephanie moved to approve the minutes of June 14, 2016, as submitted. Chris seconded. Approved by all those members who had attended June 14 meeting. Mary Antes, Rachel Bratt, Chris Di Bona, Pat Harlan, Armine Roat.

Marty Nichols resignation: Marty indicated that he would be submitting a letter of resignation, after having served on the Wayland Housing Partnership for 16 years. In part, he noted frustration with the way in which our views were not solicited by BOS prior to their sending a letter regarding Brookside Development to MassHousing. He was also noted that he was troubled by Betty Salzberg's dismissal, without any substantive reasons, from the Conservation Commission, by the BOS. Members acknowledged his role and thanked him for his years of dedicated service. Marty has been representing the Wayland Housing Authority, so it will be up to them to nominate a new member. Rachel said that as soon as Marty submits his letter of resignation, she would write to WHA asking them to appoint Jennifer Steel.

Habitat update: Mary indicated that the project continues to be difficult and present challenges. The current major problem is that the assessment of the units is around \$400K/unit, which means that taxes would need to be paid based on this assessment. However, due to the subsidies involved, the owners paid less than \$200K for each home. Habitat International recently changed its policy regarding assessment, so that neighboring property values would not be negatively impacted by the lower Habitat assessment. However, this is a major problem for properties in MA, where taxes must be based on assessed value of the home. Obviously, a tax bill based on a \$400K assessment would be a major problem for these new owners. The occupancy permits for the second building have not yet been issued, pending resolution of this problem.

River's Edge: Chris noted that the committee is in the midst of deliberations and that she was not at liberty to say much. Suffice to say that much of the issue revolves around the disparity in the two bids for soil removal. Jennifer referenced the recent letter in the Town Crier by Werner Gossels, which strongly recommended that the Town take care of the soil removal and remediation before the land is sold, to ensure that the land is environmentally safe. This is both critical for health of the future occupants and for liability reasons.

Rachel mentioned that Devens Hamlen is proposing that the 3 affordable units at Covered Bridge to be converted from rentals and, instead, to sell them at affordable costs. She indicated her opposition to this. Marty suggested that we bring the issue to the Planning Board.

Next meetings of WHP: October 18 @ 7:30.
Tentative meeting scheduled for November 29
Final meeting for 2016 scheduled for December 13.

At 9:30 Marty made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Joanne.