

CAMBRIDGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST
MEETING MINUTES
March 5, 2009

Ackerman Room, City Hall
795 Massachusetts Ave.

Trustees: Robert W. Healy, Susan Schlesinger, James Stockard, Gwen Noyes, Peter Daly, Michael Haran

Staff: Beth Rubenstein, Assistant City Manager; Chris Cotter, Housing Director; Cassie Arnaud, Housing Planner; Anna Dolmatch, Housing Planner; Linda Prosnitz, Housing Planner.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm.

PROJECT UPDATES

New Cambridgeport Development – HRI is moving towards acquisition, completing the environmental review and due diligence.

7 Temple Street – The BZA approved the comprehensive permit application on July 24th but the permit has been appealed by abutters. CHA and City have submitted motion to dismiss the appeal.

Pine Street – HRI purchased the 12-unit building on January 23rd. They are waiting for word on their request for state funding.

1066 Cambridge Street – JAS is reviewing design options and looking for investors for the tax credits.

35 Harvey Street – Construction is underway and CASCAP expects the project to be complete in the summer.

424-430 Windsor – The Planning Board decision of this JAS project is still under appeal.

823 Main Street – Construction closing held in June 2008. Construction is progressing and completion is expected in the summer. Applications for the units are currently under review.

22 Lopez Street – Complete.

FTHB Buydown Assistance – Trust expanded in February 2009 to include inclusionary, non-profit, and resale units. Looking at this for new units and resale units.

125 Harvard Street (Print Shop) – Construction is going well with an expected completion of late summer 2009.

VFW - Buyer selection for final unit is underway.

191-195 + 203 Prospect Street – CHA is waiting to hear about state financing and exploring options for separating two properties.

Bedrick Properties – Rehab of units is on going.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Staff informed the Trust that minutes of Trust meetings will be posted on a page of the City's website dedicated to the Trust.

Upon a motion moved and seconded, it was voted to approve the minutes as amended from the February 5, 2009 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS/ UPDATES

New Request for Funding for Affordable Rental Housing

Trust went into Executive Session to discuss a real estate transaction. Mr. Stockard left the room and was absent for the discussion.

Staff presented a request from CAHC for an acquisition loan for a sufficient amount for the acquisition and rehabilitation of an existing 26-unit rental building. In addition, CAHC is requesting a temporary bridge loan of a sufficient amount which would be repaid at the construction closing. The Trust discussed the reasons for the bridge loan. CAHC plans to apply for tax credits in 2010. The Trust discussed the timing of application funding rounds and the conversion of the building to affordable housing.

Upon a motion and seconded, with Mr. Stockard not present, it was:

Voted: To approve CAHC's request for permanent and bridge financing for the acquisition and rehabilitation of this building.

Trust went out of Executive Session

Mr. Stockard re-entered the room.

YWCA

Staff presented a request from the Cambridge YWCA for predevelopment funds to assist them in preparing plans for renovating their 104 units of housing. Housing staff has been working the YWCA board and staff along with both DHCD and CEDAC to assess the management, capital needs, and sustainability of this housing. Predevelopment funding will be used for architectural and design studies, environmental work, consulting and legal work.

The YWCA has made progress in recent years and now has had several years of improved operations after engaging a professional management company. Likewise experienced new staff and board members have helped the YWCA reexamine the YWCA's involvement and continuing commitment to the housing. With the Women's Institute as their development consultant, the YWCA has prepared a multi-million redevelopment plan; the largest portion of which is attributable to the residential portion of the buildings. They are preparing to apply for historic tax credits and anticipate making a significant request for funding to the Trust as well as other public sources. Staff are working with the YWCA as this request is prepared.

While the Trust was supportive of the YWCA's request, Trust members discussed questions for consideration regarding the YWCA's redevelopment plan and request for Trust funding to assist in this effort, including the buildings' configuration, density, supportive service plans and funding, operating and development budgets, and development team members. The Trust recommended that an experienced Cambridge-based development partner be added to the team to be available to assist the YWCA during the redevelopment effort and with operating the housing after the project is complete.

Upon a motion and seconded, it was:

Voted: To approve YWCA's request for \$136,000 for predevelopment financing with the condition that experienced Cambridge-based development partner be added to the team to be available to assist the YWCA during the redevelopment effort and with operating the housing after the project is complete.

Foreclosure Report

Staff reviewed a recent analysis of foreclosure activity in the city. There were 19 completed foreclosures in Cambridge last year, which is less than .2% of the housing units in the city. At least eight of these were investor owned properties. Foreclosure activity in Cambridge remains low even though it has increased over the last couple of years. There were no foreclosures in 2005, two in 2006, and 17 in 2007. There is little evidence of short sales as condominium prices have remained stable for the last few years.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 26, at 4 pm in the Ackerman Room. Confirmation of this time and date will follow.