

CAMBRIDGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST
MEETING MINUTES
September 24, 2009

Ackerman Room, City Hall
795 Massachusetts Ave.

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

Staff: Beth Rubenstein, Assistant City Manager; Chris Cotter, Housing Director; Linda Prosnitz, Housing Planner

Also Present: Neal Sharma, CASCAP

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

Upon a motion moved and seconded, it was voted to approve the minutes as amended from the July 22, 2009 meeting.

PROJECT UPDATES

YMCA - Caritas is purchasing the 128 unit SRO from the YMCA. They applied for state funding and are waiting for word from the state.

Lincoln Way/Jackson Gardens - CHA received \$10 million in ARRA funding and expects to begin the public process and design review shortly.

Cambridge YWCA – YWCA has received commitments of historic tax credits and is waiting to hear about state funding.

78-80 Porter Road – CHA will be assembling permanent financing and converting to affordable housing over next 18-24 months.

625 Putnam Avenue – HRI application for a Special Permit was approved by the Planning Board at the September 8 meeting. They are waiting for state funding decisions.

7 Temple Street – Trial date for the appeal of the comprehensive permit is in October. FHLB funds have been awarded. CHA applied for DHCD funding in the summer rental round and is waiting for the state's decision.

95-97 Pine Street – The contractor is selected. HRI expects to close on state funding in the fall.

1066 Cambridge Street – Just a Start is reviewing options including proceeding with an as-of-right design.

35 Harvey Street – Construction is nearing completion.

424-430 Windsor – The Planning Board decision is under appeal.

823 Main Street – Construction is nearing completion. Nine units are under agreement. An open house was held on September 17.

125 Harvard Street (Print Shop) – Construction is going well with an expected completion of fall 2009. Buyer selection is continuing.

191-195 + 203 Prospect Street – CHA reapplied for state funding in the summer rental round for 191-195 Prospect. 203 Prospect will be rehabbed separately.

NEW BUSINESS/ UPDATES

Michael Haran and Neal Sharma left the room.

131 Harvard Street

Staff presented a request from CASCAP for an acquisition and predevelopment loan of \$500,000 for the property owned by Neighbors for A Better Acre (NBC) on Harvard Street. CASCAP's offer of \$450,000 was accepted by NBC. The request includes \$50,000 in predevelopment funds for environmental testing, design, taxes, legal and recording.

The property was transferred to NBC in 1998 by the developers of 210 Broadway. A Restriction Agreement was placed on the property at the time to limit development to uses with a community benefit, including affordable housing. The property sat vacant and undeveloped since the transfer.

CASCAP is completing construction of a 24-unit affordable homeownership project on the site adjacent to the parcel. CASCAP and CDD have completed preliminary feasibility studies that indicate the NBC site could accommodate approximately eight units in a mix of two and three bedrooms with parking.

The Trust discussed the provision that net proceeds from the sale be used for the benefit of the community as has been contemplated by CASCAP and NBC. The Trust members agreed that net proceeds should be returned to the City for use for the benefit of low and moderate income residents of the Area IV neighborhood.

Upon a motion and seconded, with Michael Haran abstaining and absent from the room, it was:

Voted: To approve CASCAP's request for an acquisition and predevelopment loan of \$500,000 with the following conditions: 1) Trust standard terms and conditions and 2) net of sales proceeds be granted to the City for use for the benefit of low and moderate income Area IV residents.

Michael Haran and Neal Sharma return to the room.

Marketing and Tenant Selection Plan

Staff presented for Trust approval a Marketing and Tenant Selection Plan for rental units developed under the inclusionary housing program. During the initial years of the Inclusionary Housing Program, a marketing and tenant selection plan was attached to the Inclusionary Housing Covenant as an illustration of how the tenant selection process worked. The plan was informational and subject to change from time to time.

Staff reported that the attachment of the sample plan to the Covenant has created some confusion about the process and requirements for marketing and tenant selection. To create clarity and consistency, the staff requested that the Trust approve the Marketing and Tenant Selection Plan. The Trust discussed the Tenant Selection Plan and the process the City uses for monitoring rental units.

Upon a motion and seconded, it was:

Voted: To approve the Inclusionary Housing Program Marketing and Tenant Selection Plan as presented.

NEW BUSINESS

The Trust discussed the City's success in housing Cambridge residents in affordable homeownership units. Staff pointed out that when units are more expensive due to the higher prices of new units, particularly three bedroom units, many applicants do not have sufficient income to purchase. The prices of resale units tend to be more affordable and meet the needs of a larger group of applicants.

The Trust discussed using buy down assistance to assist applicants who cannot afford the higher priced units, and asked the staff to report back with information on residents served in these units and changes in the program that might be advisable to ensure units continue to meet resident needs.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:54 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for October 22, 2009, at 4 pm in the Ackerman Room. Confirmation of this time and date will follow.