

CAMBRIDGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST
MEETING MINUTES
December 15, 2016

Ackerman Room, Cambridge City Hall
795 Massachusetts Ave.

Trustees Present: Louis DePasquale, Chair; Peter Daly, Florrie Darwin, Gwen Noyes, Cheryl-Ann Pizza-Zeoli, Susan Schlesinger, James Stockard, Bill Tibbs, Elaine Thorne

Trustees Absent: none.

Staff Present: Chris Cotter, Housing Director; Cassie Arnaud, Housing Planner; Anna Dolmatch, Housing Planner; Linda Prosnitz, Housing Planner

Others Present: Lee Farris, McMillan Gaither, James Williamson

The meeting was called to order at 4:00.

Upon a motion moved and seconded, it was

VOTED: To approve the minutes for the meeting of Thursday, November 17 as submitted.

PROJECT UPDATE –

Porter Square – Capstone/Hope are working on design and development plans and have submitted their application for 40B site approval to DHCD

Concord Ave – HRI also are working on design and development plans; have held two community meetings as well as multiple meetings with neighborhood groups and individuals; submitted pre-application to DHCD for funding and will also be seeking comprehensive permit.

Jefferson Park State Public Housing –Construction is underway and proceeding well.

Update on St. Patrick's Place

Staff provided an update on activities related to the recent fire in East Cambridge which severely damaged several buildings including Just A Start's St. Patrick's Place development, and displaced dozens of households. Staff described the coordinated effort among City agencies, the Red Cross, non-profits, and other concerned groups to help address the needs of residents impacted by the fire, including the establishment of a one-stop drop-in center at City Hall for residents to receive assistance. Trust members lauded the City and its partners for the exceptional job done to help support and rehouse families displaced by the fire, as well as thanking the community for the rapid and generous response to the Mayor's fund. The City Manager said that he had been very gratified by the outpouring of support from the community.

In terms of the future of St Patrick's Place, staff reported that Just A Start was in the early stages of evaluating whether or not the building could be saved. Prior to the fire, JAS had begun conversations with staff regarding a proposed multi-phase recapitalization of the JAS portfolio. The church building had been part of the first phase of recapitalization, but it was yet to be determined whether or not that would remain the case. Staff said that they would continue to discuss options with Just A Start as more information was obtained.

OLD BUSINESS – UPDATES

Update on Inclusionary Zoning

Staff provided an updated on the process of updating the Inclusionary Zoning provisions of the City's zoning ordinance. It was reported that the petition had been filed, and that the language reflects discussions of the specific components reviewed by the Trust at the Trust's November meeting. The petition went to the City Council at the end of November and was referred to both the Planning Board and to the Ordinance Committee. The petition would be discussed at the next Planning Board meeting on December 20, 2016 and at Ordinance Committee on January 5, 2017. Trust members voiced their hopes that the petition would continue to move along through the process so that it can be in place as soon as possible. Staff explained the time frame for review and acknowledged that it could take multiple meetings. Trust members encouraged each other to try to attend one or both meetings to underscore their commitment to the changes. It was also agreed that the Trust would submit a letter of support. After a brief discussion regarding content of the letter, Staff agreed to prepare a draft which would be circulated for review and comment.

Update on 675 Concord Ave

Staff said that they wanted to provide a brief update on HRI's Concord Avenue development. Prior to the update, Mr. Daly recused himself from the discussion and left the room.

It was reported that HRI was in the process of refining designs and development plans for their Concord Highlands new construction project. They had been meeting with City staff from each relevant department, including the Fire Department, to gain feedback on their plan and understand all project requirements. Staff noted that the project's size was triggering a different level of review and requirements than is typical of most smaller-scale affordable developments.

It was reported that HRI had begun to hold community meetings on the project and that the design had been well-received by the community. HRI had also submitted a pre-application for funding to DHCD and were planning to submit an application for a Comprehensive Permit to the BZA in early 2017.

Staff reported that they had met with the Project Review Committee to discuss the development, including proposed income mix, potential funding sources and anticipated project costs. HRI's proposal is to build roughly 99 new affordable rental units of which the majority would be subject to LIHTC income limits of 60% AMI, that an additional number of units would be affordable to households earning 60-80% AMI, and that a small number of units would be affordable to households earning 80-100% AMI. Trust members agreed that this income-mix made sense for the development. Staff said that HRI's early estimates of

project costs were in the range of \$550,000 to \$600,000+ per unit, and that the combined Trust/City request could be in the range of \$23 million to \$28 million depending on final development costs and other sources of funding. These estimates will be refined as they are able to further develop construction and design plans, and know more about other funding sources.

Staff said that one of the biggest variables with regarding to other funding sources is the impact which the recent election and new administration could have on resources, particularly with regard to potential reductions in tax credit equity and increases in interest rates. Trust members asked whether the state would be willing to step in to fill gaps resulting from changes in funding priorities on the Federal level. Staff said that it was too early to predict, but that it could also result in fewer projects being funded by the state, making already competitive application process even more competitive. The PRC members acknowledged these challenges, but reiterated their support for the project. After a brief discussion, Trust members voiced their support for the project and it was agreed that a support letter from the Trust would be prepared and submitted for both the DHCD funding application and BZA zoning process.

Envision Cambridge update

Staff provided a brief update on the ongoing Citywide planning process. It was reported that roughly 60 applications had been received from individuals interested in participating in the Envision Cambridge Housing Working Group which was in the process of being formed. A final list would be sent to the City Manager for review and approval. In the meantime, the Envision Cambridge Advisory Committee and Alewife Working Group had already begun meeting and would be holding public meetings in early 2017.

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for January 26 at 4:00 p.m.

- Meeting Minutes from the Trust's November 17, 2016 meeting.
- Project Update