

CAMBRIDGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST
MEETING MINUTES
November 21, 2013

Ackerman Room, City Hall
795 Massachusetts Ave.

- Trustees Present: Richard Rossi, Chair; Peter Daly, Florrie Darwin, Michael Haran, Gwen Noyes, William Tibbs
- Trustees Absent: Susan Schlesinger, James Stockard
- Staff Present: Brian Murphy, Assistant City Manager for Community Development; Chris Cotter, Housing Director; Anna Dolmatch, Housing Planner; Linda Prosnitz, Housing Planner
- Others Present: Elaine DeRosa; Cheryl-Ann Pizza-Zeoli; Deborah Ruhe

The meeting was called to order at 4:15 pm.

Upon a motion moved and seconded, it was voted to approve the minutes from the September 26, 2013 meeting as submitted.

PROJECT UPDATES

Jefferson Park State Public Housing – The CHA applied to DHCD for HILAPP funding. They expect a decision in the next several weeks.

Putnam Square/2 Mt Auburn – HRI received a funding award in the most recent DHCD rental round. Governor Patrick announced the awards and signed the housing bond bill at an event at the site. Work on early stage construction is underway.

131 Harvard Street/Port Landing – The project did not receive funding in the most recent DHCD round. They will reapply in the spring round.

117 Rindge Ave – Heading Home is working to close with the state; construction to begin in November.

Bishop Allen Apartments (aka Norstin) – Just A Start received an award from DHCD in the most recent rental round. The project will go out to bid in December.

Chapman Arms – Construction closing completed in August 2013. Construction underway.

Lincoln Way/Jackson Gardens – Jackson Gardens is done and fully occupied. First phase of Lincoln Way is complete; construction on the second phase is almost complete. An event will be held in the spring.

78-80 Porter Road – CAHC looking at other financing options, possibly in conjunction with 195 Prospect Street.

7 Temple Street – Construction is underway with an expected completion date of late 2014.

Inclusionary Update – There continues to be a large amount of IZ activity. Two large projects, Vox On 2 (former Faces site) and Fawcett Street are getting applications for lease up. Several small ownership projects are also preparing to close with selected buyers.

Zoning Update – There are several ongoing discussions about potential zoning changes. In addition to the continuing discussion of the K2C2 recommendations, the City Council has discussed increasing the Inclusionary Zoning percentage from 15 percent to 18 percent. There is also potential for a Middle Income Housing requirement based on K2C2 recommendations. These matters are likely to be discussed by the new City Council in the next term.

CPA Funds – Mr. Rossi stated that the State has increased the City’s CPA match by approximately \$2.2MM. These funds will be included in the 2015 CPA process.

New Business

Middle Income Housing Survey

Staff presented a request for up to \$30,000 to conduct a professional random survey of middle-income households to learn about demand and housing preferences to inform potential middle-income housing programs. Current programs are more focused on low- and moderate-income applicants, therefore the Division does not have extensive data on the demand for middle-income affordable housing and how households prioritize housing choices.

A professionally-conducted survey will supplement the anecdotal evidence and provide a statistically significant sample size from which to make some generalizations about middle-income housing needs. This will help inform the development of programs. The survey will be conducted via phone and targeted to current Cambridge residents likely to fall in the middle-income range.

The Trust suggested that the survey also be available via other channels, such as the City website. Staff responded that the professional survey firm will assist in refining the draft survey, and once it is finalized it will be put out on the website and distributed through other channels such as neighborhood groups. However, these results will be separate from the data gathered by the survey firm, as “opt-in” results have an inherent bias.

Staff estimate that approximately \$25,000 will be used for the phone survey, with an additional \$5,000 for follow up activities such as focus groups.

Upon a motion moved and seconded, it was:

VOTED: to approve the request for \$30,000 in Trust funds to conduct a survey and follow up activities on middle-income household housing preferences to inform the discussion of policies and programs.

131 Harvard Street

The Chair indicated that the next item for discussion before the Trust pertained to details regarding the potential acquisition of real estate, and that continuing in open session might

have a detrimental effect on the negotiations. At 4:41 PM, the Chair entertained a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss this matter, and indicated that the Trust would resume in Open Session at the conclusion of the Executive Session.

Upon a motion moved, seconded and approved by a 6-0 roll call, with Ms. Schlesinger and Mr. Stockard recorded as absent, the meeting went into executive session.

It was announced that the Trust would not reconvene in Open Session.