

CAMBRIDGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST  
MEETING MINUTES  
April 10, 2014

Ackerman Room, City Hall  
795 Massachusetts Ave.

Trustees Present: Richard Rossi, Chair; Peter Daly, Michael Haran, Gwen Noyes, Cheryl-Ann Pizza-Zeoli, James Stockard, William Tibbs

Trustees Absent: Florrie Darwin, Susan Schlesinger

Staff Present: Brian Murphy, Assistant City Manager for Community Development; Iram Farooq, Acting Deputy Assistant City Manager for Community Development; Chris Cotter, Housing Director; Cassie Arnaud, Housing Planner; Anna Dolmatch, Housing Planner; Linda Prosnitz, Housing Planner; Cliff Cook, Planning and Information Manager

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 pm.

Upon a motion moved and seconded, it was voted to approve the minutes from the February 27, 2014 meeting.

**PROJECT UPDATE** – Upon a recommendation by staff given the day’s agenda, the Trust deferred discussion of Project Update to discuss New Business. Project Update information was handed out to all attendees.

**New Business**

**Middle Income Housing**

Staff updated the trust on the status of K2C2 recommendations to create middle-income housing, zoning petitions designed to implement those recommendations, and middle-income program design and policy questions staff have been considering. Staff also reported that the City, jointly with Arlington and Somerville, requested that MAPC conducts an assessment of regional middle-income housing needs, resources and national best practices. CDD staff are working with MAPC and other municipalities to undertake this analysis. Staff are also working with the survey consultant to finish the survey of middle-income household and housing choices.

Staff also informed the Trust that the Alexandria Real Estate development in Kendall Square was progressing, and Alexandria is now moving forward with plans for its first residential building. The new building will include a middle income rental housing component along with a low/moderate-income component which will be administered under the inclusionary housing program. These middle-income units could give early insight into program design and demand in advance of units that might be created through other zoning initiatives.

While the units were intended to be administered by Alexandria, there may be an opportunity for the City to manage these units which could then become part of new middle-income program and develop best practices for the program guidelines. Alexandria’s first residential

building will be 98 units, of which early plans call for 15 to be affordable to low- and moderate-income households, and 24 to be middle-income units. CDD staff have discussed how the City might be involved in administering these units if the program can be designed cooperatively.

The Trust discussed some of the policy areas where decisions are needed prior to commencing any middle-income program. Such a program would likely have some policy differences from the Inclusionary program. The Trust discussed several of these policy issues including rent setting, affordability targeting, unit location, unit size (family-sized or like-size units), other eligibility criteria and City administration of such a program. One of the issues is the unit makeup. The Alexandria requirement calls for a percentage of the building square footage, not like-for-like units like Inclusionary. The building as designed has a majority of studio and one-bedroom units. Trust members agreed it would be preferable to have fewer units but more family-sized units.

The system for determining rents was also discussed. The Trust discussed the idea of set rents which might work better than income-based rents, as are found in the inclusionary program, for a middle-income program, and that a two-tiered rent system may be advisable, for instance with some units targeted at 90% AMI and others at 110% AMI.

Trust members asked about the outreach and marketing for any new units whether offered through the City or by a developer. Trust members wanted to ensure that a wide range of community members are made aware of any new housing opportunities for eligible households.

The Trust asked about next steps in making decisions for both the Alexandria middle income units and a program to implement K2C2 zoning recommendations. Staff stated that Alexandria will revise their proposal for their building based on discussions with CDD staff, and that staff would then hope to work with them to develop a program through which the City might offer the units as middle-income rental units. Staff informed the Trust that while there is no schedule for new zoning petitions, staff expect that middle-income housing will be a topic at the upcoming Roundtable meeting with the City Council, and that would be advisable for the Trust to continue to consider middle-income housing and its recommendations for program guidelines which might go with zoning recommendations.

### **CDD Analysis of Poverty in Cambridge**

Cliff Cook, Planning Information Manager, presented his report on Poverty in Cambridge. This report had previously been presented to the City Council and other groups. The report focused on the demographics of households with below the federal poverty line in Cambridge, including changes in the poverty rate for different demographic groups including families and families with children.

The report finds that the poverty rate in Cambridge has increased since 2000, most dramatically for female-headed households with children under 18. The report also included maps showing the distribution of poverty through Cambridge census tracts. Seven census tracts contain more than 50% of families in poverty.

The Managing Trustee stated that the Trust should think about the information and how it can be incorporated into ongoing discussions of affordable housing programs as it is being considered in other program areas.

### **City Council Roundtable**

The upcoming City Council Roundtable to discuss affordable housing was discussed. The roundtable is scheduled for June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Staff will consider what types of information will be helpful for the discussion. The Managing Trustee proposed that Trust members consider what information would be helpful and how they might suggest staff prepare given the Trust's objectives for the roundtable.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 24 at 4 p.m.

### **OTHER MATERIALS**

- Meeting Minutes from the Trust's February 27, 2014 meeting
- Project Update
- Poverty in Cambridge presentation materials