

CAMBRIDGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST
MEETING MINUTES
November 17, 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, Bill Tibbs

Trustees Absent: James Stockard, Elaine Thorne

Staff Present: Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for Community Development; Chris Cotter, Housing Director; Cassie Arnaud, Housing Planner; Anna Dolmatch, Housing Planner; Linda Prosnitz, Housing Planner

Others Present: Elaine DeRosa, Jim Perrine

The meeting was called to order at 4:11.

Upon a motion moved and seconded, it was

VOTED: To approve the minutes for the meeting of Thursday, October 27 as submitted.

PROJECT UPDATE –

Briston Arms – Renovations are nearly complete.

Jefferson Park State Public Housing – Relocation and demolition are complete. Construction is underway.

131 Harvard Street/Port Landing – Opening ceremony was held on November 14. The project is now complete.

463 Cambridge Street – HRI repaid the CAHT bridge loan. The project is now complete.

Concord Ave – HRI acquired the site. Predevelopment work continues. First public meeting was held in September. HRI will submit an application for state funding.

Porter Square – Capstone/Hope have acquired the property. Predevelopment work is ongoing.

OLD BUSINESS – UPDATES

Staff provided an update on the petition for changes to the Inclusionary Zoning ordinance. After a long and thorough process, the petition has been completed. It will be placed on the City Council agenda for Monday, November 21. The petition is based on the recommendations from the Trust that were then endorsed by the Council Housing Committee.

Over the past few weeks, staff worked to comprehensively craft the language for the inclusionary housing petition. There are several important changes which advance recommendations from the City Council's Housing Committee.

The first is that the set-aside of affordable units will increase to 20 percent of the total building. This will now be based on the building floor area, not the number of units. This will provide more flexibility in creating larger affordable units. There are also several provisions requiring affordable family units in buildings with three-bedroom units. The ordinance requires that the ratio of affordable three-bedroom units must be the same for affordable units as for market units. In addition, 20 percent of the affordable floor area in buildings of more than 50,000 square feet must be devoted to three bedroom units.

Developers will now be required to make a contribution to the Trust for "fractional" units. This occurs when 20 percent of the units does not result in a whole number. The ordinance was also expanded to apply to buildings that remain vacant for at least 24 months and are then reoccupied.

Studio units will also have a lower pricing as the petition includes the recommended pricing of studio units at 25% of gross monthly income. In addition, the maximum allowable income for homeownership units will be increased to 100% of AMI.

In response to recommendations from the Chamber of Commerce and the development community, the petition clarifies that the new provisions would not apply to projects with approved special permits or building permits as long as developments proceed in the required timeframe. Likewise it would allow for certain amendments to PUD special permits that do not reduce the amount of residential floor area to be built, or increase the amount of approved non-residential space. This would allow for changes to infrastructure plans that are often seen in PUD projects which have a longer development timeframe. Staff wanted to ensure that the ordinance would not be a disincentive to the increasing residential units in approved PUDs.

The petition also incorporates certain program policies that were not previously part of the current ordinance but have been put in place in response to program needs over the years. These include the program eligibility range of 50-80% AMI for rental; annual certification requirement for tenants; eligibility for existing tenants up to 100% AMI; and the minimum rent policy. The petition would allow for CDD to set standards, guidelines and policies for the program with advice from the Trust. The petition also allows for the City to promulgate regulations when needed.

Trust members expressed concern about changes in how program policies are set and that the petition which would allow the Assistant City Manager to promulgate regulations. Trust members thought that the Trust has a useful perspective and can provide guidance as program policies and regulations are considered. Some thought that including certain elements of the program in the petition, that those areas might become politicized

Peter Daly asked about the next steps in the process. Chris Cotter stated that the petition would first go before the City Council, which would then refer it to both the Ordinance Committee and the Planning Board. Public hearings will then be held at both the Ordinance Committee and the Planning Board. Once recommendations are received from the Ordinance Committee and Planning Board, the petition would once again go before the City Council for for passage to a second reading and then adoption.

Peter Daly asked how many Council votes were required to adopt the new ordinance. Chris Cotter stated that six votes were needed. Staff expect a lot of questions as the petition is a more substantial rewrite than anticipated. Trust members stated that they would make themselves available to answer questions during the process. Trust members stated that the petition language would help the community better understand the ordinance, such as how the affordable ratio works.

Trust members asked which projects already had special permits and would not be subject to these changes. These projects include the MIT PUDs in Kendall Square and North Point PUD, which would move forward with the current effective affordable ratio of 11.5 percent after the bonus; and Mass+Main, which was permitted at 17 percent affordable.

Trust members asked about the timing for the next steps. Chris Cotter stated that time was being held for the Planning Board meeting on Tuesday, December 20th but that it would need to be finalized and advertised ahead of time, so it was unclear if it would be on the agenda for that meeting.

Chris Cotter stated that the draft ordinance language was available for Trust review and that Trust members should let staff know if they have any questions.

The meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for December 15 at 4:00 p.m.

- Meeting Minutes from the Trust's October 27, 2016 meeting.
- Project Update