

CAMBRIDGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST
MEETING MINUTES
June 22, 2017

Ackerman Room, Cambridge City Hall
795 Massachusetts Ave.

- Trustees Present: Louis DePasquale, Chair; Gwen Noyes, Cheryl-Ann Pizza-Zeoli, Jim Stockard, Elaine Thorne
- Trustees Absent: Peter Daly, Florrie Darwin, Susan Schlesinger, Bill Tibbs
- Staff Present: Lisa Peterson, Deputy City Manager; Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for Community Development; Chris Cotter, Housing Director; Cassie Arnaud, Housing Planner; Anna Dolmatch, Housing Planner
- Others Present: James Williamson

The meeting was called to order at 4:05.

Upon a motion moved and seconded, it was

VOTED: To approve both the open and the executive session minutes for the meeting of Thursday, May 25, 2017 with one modification to both sets of minutes to clarify that Elaine Thorne was absent from the meeting and Florrie Darwin was present at the meeting, and modifications in the Executive Session minutes to remove the extra “from” for clearer reading and to add a missing “of” on second page.

PROJECT UPDATE –

Jefferson Park State Public Housing – Construction is ongoing. CHA expects project to be done in phases, beginning in Fall 2017. Staff informed the Trust that the CHA had invited voucher holders living outside Cambridge to apply for units at JP State. To date, they have not received a large expression of interest. Staff will continue to monitor the CHA’s experience as this will inform conversations about preferences.

HomeBridge Program. The City’s homeownership financial assistance program has been expanded and relaunched as HomeBridge, Staff held a well-attended information session where turnout exceeded 80 people. Interested residents had good questions, had done research, and expressed a good level of interest. It was noted that CDD’s new communications staff person was especially helpful with outreach through social media.

Concord Ave – Comprehensive permit has been approved and HRI is now waiting to hear from DHCD on the status of its funding applications. Meanwhile, design and development budgets are being refined, with a goal of bringing a permanent financing request to the August or September Trust meeting depending on when DHCD funding announcements occur.

Porter Square – Predevelopment work is ongoing. It is anticipated that the project will apply for rental funds in the next DHCD round, expected to be held in early 2018. Capstone has held a number of meetings with both direct abutters and a broader community meeting will

be held on Tuesday July 25th. Once details on location and time are finalized, staff will share details with Trust.

NEW BUSINESS – VAIL COURT

Staff updated Trust members on the disposition process for Vail Court. Plans for demolition are complete, and the City has held public meeting to answer demolition-related questions. It is expected that demolition will be complete by September 2017.

In the meantime, staff will be working on the process of getting redevelopment underway. The disposition specifies that the use will be for low and moderate income-housing, but the specific type of affordable housing is yet to be determine. For instance, rental vs homeownership, or targeted to a specific population. The plan is for the City and Trust to host public meetings in the coming months to hear ideas and comments from the community on housing needs, and design considerations for the site itself. To date, issues regarding scale and open space have been raised.

The Trust agreed that it was important to understand the interests and concerns of the community, including abutters and close neighbors, the broader neighborhood, and the community overall. Comments received during these listening sessions will help inform a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) which will be developed in order to solicit interested developers and choose the team that can best carry out this redevelopment. While timing is being worked out now, the goal is to hold one meeting in July and a second similar meeting after Labor Day. All agreed that it was important to provide ample opportunities for all voices to be heard and ideas shared. There was a brief discussion regarding responding to the concerns of immediate neighbors, which may vary from those of the rest of the community. It was agreed that this is an opportunity and an asset for the entire community, and that it is important to get feedback and input from a wide range of community members. At the same time, it was agreed that the immediate abutters will be most directly impacted so that it will be important to communicate with them regarding near term issues such as fencing, demolition and rodent control as well as the impact of the redevelopment on their adjacent properties as the project proceeds. Given the anticipated timeline, which does not anticipate the RFQ being issued until 2018, there should be ample time to get community ideas and feedback from all interested parties.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:55.

Materials:

- Meeting Minutes from the Trust's May 27, 2017 meeting.
- Project Update