

CAMBRIDGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST
MEETING MINUTES
July 27, 2017

Ackerman Room, Cambridge City Hall
795 Massachusetts Ave.

Trustees Present: Louis DePasquale, Chair; Peter Daly, Florrie Darwin, Cheryl-Ann Pizza-Zeoli, Susan Schlesinger, Bill Tibbs

Trustees Absent: Gwen Noyes, Jim 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: James Williamson

The meeting was called to order at 4:12.

Upon a motion moved and seconded, it was

VOTED: To approve the minutes for the meeting of Thursday, June 22, 2017 as submitted.

PROJECT UPDATES

Vail Court

The City and Trust held a Vail Court community meeting on Monday, July 24. The purpose of the meeting was to hear from the public on city-wide affordable housing needs, how those needs could be addressed at the Vail Court site. It was also an opportunity to share design and development considerations. A second similar meeting will be held after Labor Day, in case residents were unable to attend the July meeting.

Approximately 50 people attended the meeting. The meeting was opened by Lisa Peterson, followed by a brief presentation by Susan Schlesinger. The presentation included an overview of the Trust and its role in the project, background on Vail Court, and summary of anticipated next steps. Most of the meeting was devoted to public comment. Several Trust members who were able to attend the meeting felt that it had gone well, with good comments raised by the community.

There was broad support for affordable housing and the types of design considerations raised by the neighbors – height, density, scale, open space – were not unexpected. A number of participants suggested that the site was suited for parking reductions, including some who felt that parking could be eliminated altogether in exchange for better design, such as lower height and/or increased green space. The need for family-sized affordable housing was raised by a number of speakers. Some participants favored mixed-income scenarios, while others were interested in targeting lower-income families and individuals.

The Trust agreed that it would be useful to provide some development parameters at the next public meeting, including clarification on the allowable mix of incomes. A meeting to further discuss and debrief on the meeting would be held prior to the next community meeting. It was also noted that there may be a Housing Committee meeting prior to the next community meeting.

Documents from the meeting are available on the City's Vail Court web page at:
www.cambridgema.gov/Departments/citymanagersoffice/vailcourt.

Porter Square- A community meeting is planned for September. Talks are continuing with the developer. This will be the first community wide meeting. The developer wants to be ready to apply for financing in the next state funding round and expect to move forward on zoning issues in the fall.

Concord Ave. – HRI is waiting for a decision on funding from the state. When that is known, a final request to the Trust will be prepared.

Jefferson Park is still on track for occupancy in the coming months.

OTHER UPDATES

HomeBridge – The roll out of HomeBridge has been a success. Several applications have already been approved. As a result of HomeBridge, there has also been an increase in applications for the resale pool.

Inclusionary – Four new inclusionary projects have recently been submitted. This includes two large projects Mass & Main and Lanes and Games. Two of the new projects are subject to the revised inclusionary provisions of the zoning ordinance. Mass & Main has its own zoning requiring 17% of the units be affordable for low/moderate households and 3% be affordable to middle income households. The zoning also calls for the possibility of purchasing the affordability for 3 additional units. Staff will bring this to the Trust as discussions progress with the developer.

Incentive- It is expected that there will be projects coming in with significant incentive payments.

Tenant and Buyer Selection Preferences – The subcommittee of the Trust has held its first meeting to discuss tenant and buyer selection preferences. Issues explored included resident preference, preferences for families with children, whether rental and homeownership should have the same preferences, and how the City preferences compare to CHA preferences. A second meeting is scheduled for August.

Inclusionary Rental Program - Regulations are continuing to be drafted and will be reviewed by the Law Department. The Trust discussed options for the composition of an appeals committee. Issues with property managers were also brought up and how they can be addressed. There is frequent turnover among property management staff which makes it challenging to consistently educate new staff about the inclusionary program. Some of the issues that can be dealt with through regulations are additional fees, utility costs, and applicant approvals. CDD and the Mayor's office are putting together a tenant forum to be held in September.

The meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 23, 2017 at 4:00 p.m.

- Meeting Minutes from the Trust's June 22, 2017 meeting.
- Project Update