

CAMBRIDGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST
MEETING MINUTES
July 26, 2018

Ackerman Room, Cambridge City Hall
795 Massachusetts Ave.

Trustees Present: Susan Schlesinger, Interim Chair, Peter Daly, Cheryl-Ann Pizza-Zeoli, Elaine Thorne, Bill Tibbs

Trustees Absent: Louis DePasquale, Florrie Darwin, Gwen Noyes, Jim Stockard

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

OTHERS: James Williamson

The meeting was called to order at 4:07.

Upon a motion moved and seconded, it was

VOTED: To approve the minutes for the meeting of Wednesday, June 28, 2018 as submitted.

PROJECT UPDATE

Squirrelwood – JAS building 23 new units and consolidating/renovating Linwood and Squirrel Brand Apartments. DHCD funding approved July 2018.

Vail Court – Demolition to begin next month.

Frost Terrace - DHCD funding was approved July 2018.

Concord Highlands - Site work underway. Preparing for Phase 2 construction closing.

Homebridge – Two units have closed in the 120% pilot program. Two three-bedroom units for under 100% AMI closed in June.

Inclusionary – A few new projects are being reviewed by staff.

NEW BUSINESS

Envision – Staff updated the Trust on the progress of the Envision working group. HR&A, the real estate economic development consultants and Utile have been analyzing different scenarios of a citywide affordable housing overlay district. Staff presented the draft of the scenarios as they would apply in the A and B zoning districts. Staff is looking for Trust's input on these scenarios. The following was presented.

One of the goals of Envision is to increase the number of 100% affordable housing developments. Staff showed a few examples of different types of 100% affordable projects that have been developed in the City. There are challenges to building these developments

due to competition with market rate developers, high per unit acquisition costs, and need for zoning relief which requires lengthy and unpredictable permitting process. In some areas of the City 100% affordable development is unfeasible.

To increase the feasibility of all affordable development in all areas of the city, various scenarios of a 100% affordable housing overlay were analyzed in Residential A & B zoning districts. The number of units and floor area that would be required to make an affordable housing development feasible were calculated. Three land areas were analyzed: less than 5,000 square feet; 5,000-10,000 square feet, and greater than 10,000 square feet. Examples of existing areas in Cambridge with mixed densities was shown to illustrate how buildings in close proximity and of different scale can work together.

Other elements of the test models were: typical FAR of 2.0; assuming 1,000 square feet of gross floor area for each housing unit; maintaining front set back typical of area; 50 foot maximum height; vary other setbacks, opens space and parking; include at grade ground floor entrances to accommodate people of all ages and abilities.

It was noted that in these areas many of the older existing buildings are non-conforming under current zoning.

In the under 5,000 square foot lot illustrations, scenarios were tested with 1) three floors with seven units, 1.89 FAR, 37% open space and 2) four floors with eight units, 2.0 FAR, 50% open space. A parking waiver would be required for these parcels.

For the 5,000 to 10,000 square foot lots test scenarios were 1) three floors with ten units, FAR 1.78, 41% open space and 2) four floors with twelve units, FAR 2.0, and 50% open space. If off street parking was included, open space would be reduced. These buildings could be similar to attached triple deckers.

For parcels greater than 10,00 square feet, illustration were shown for 1)three floors with 17 units, 1.49 FAR and 50% open space and 2) four floors with 23 units, 2.0 FAR and 50% open space. Illustrations were shown without off street parking.

The staff asked the Trust for feedback on the presentation and the scenarios as this is a draft and still in process. The Trust suggested that the illustrations show more articulation of the buildings, not all with flat roofs to be more typical of what they would look like in the neighborhoods. It was also suggested that a comparison be done to actual built density. It should be made clear that this will not result in hundreds of units but will have a more modest impact.

Other considerations discussed were that parking could be an issue since all of the scenarios do not include off street parking. The overlay would apply to both new infill housing and conversion of existing buildings which would have less impact on changes to the built environment. The design review process is also an important component for discussions. Other suggestions include talking about the social context of inclusion.

Trust discussed that a similar analysis is taking place in the corridors which have different challenges. There was a discussion of build out projections. Envision is projecting to 2030. Projections will vary by area of the city. The correlation between the new jobs and housing is also an important and informing factor.

Envision staff discussed how the recommendations will proceed. There are conflicts, such as between density and environment, and different scenarios will be looked at and recommendations made. The top tier recommendations from the Envision process will be presented and broken down into categories by such considerations as time frame and feasibility.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for August 27 or August 28 at 4:00 p.m.

- Meeting Minutes from the Trust's June 28, 2018 meeting.
- Project Update
- Affordable Housing Overlay Analysis Draft