



DANVERS AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

TOWN HALL, DANVERS, MASSACHUSETTS 01923
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Minutes March 23, 2016

Danvers Affordable Housing Trust: Carla King, Don Gates, John Alden, Stacey Bernson and Tish Lentine

Staff: Susan Fletcher and Francine Butler

Minutes of February 17, 2016

Gates made an amendment to the minutes to clarify the monthly payments made to the Community Council. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously voted to approve the minutes of February 17, 2016, as amended.

Partnering with Danvers Community Council

There was a discussion concerning the invoice being submitted to the Danvers Affordable Housing Trust. Gates said that he believes that the Community Council has already selected a recipient for the first \$1,000 of the funding.

66 Holten Street (Map 50 Lot 192)

Lentine said that she had not had an opportunity to look into this lot. She would report back at the next meeting.

Community Preservation Act: Discussion/Update

Fletcher said that the presentation was made to the Selectmen. It went well and the Selectmen voted to send it to Town Meeting for a vote. The CPA Committee and the Selectmen did not say that it should be approved, but they felt it should go forward to Town Meeting. CPA funding can be used for three specific items; historic preservation, open space and recreation and community housing. Fletcher said that if a home was worth \$900,000 the CPA tax amount would be approximately \$30 per quarterly tax bill.

Fletcher said that the amount of the CPA can be from 1.5% to 3%. Gates asked what the calculation would be based on for the Town, and Fletcher responded 1.5%. There would be exemptions for low income individuals and families and low and moderate income seniors. In addition the first \$100,000 of the house's value would be exempt.

Alden asked what the projected value would be per year collected for the CPA. Fletcher said that it would be around \$900,000. There was a discussion as to the matching amounts. She said that the Governor added money in the budget to be added to the CPA Trust Fund. They are also trying to raise the fees at the Registry of Deeds which go to the CPA Trust Fund. Fletcher felt that they did not have to worry about the legislature, and they believed that there will never not be a match. There is a lot of pressure for a match since close to half of the communities have CPA.

Alden confirmed that all projects recommended for CPA funding need a Town Meeting vote.

Fletcher said that 10% or more can be given to the Trust without a specific project in mind.

Gates confirmed that the funds only had to be allocated to the Trust, and then they could spend the funds as the Trust felt it should be used. Fletcher said if they had a specific project, the funds could be used towards that as well.

Fletcher said that the CPA Coalition is a good thing. If it passes Town Meeting, it will go on the ballot for the November election. She said if it passes Town Meeting, then the Selectmen want the CPA Committee to stay in place for informational purposes. Fletcher felt optimistic about Town Meeting.

Fletcher passed out a booklet to the Board for CPA and Affordable Housing entitled “Create, Preserve and Support” from a workshop she attended.

ZBA Public Hearing: Castagna Real Estate Development LLC & Conifer Hill Executive Condominium Office Park Trust

Fletcher recommended that a letter should be sent to the ZBA regarding this project. Gates felt a letter should be sent indicating that if they do create residential housing, some of these units should be affordable. Fletcher said that they should look for 20% of the units to be affordable. Fletcher said that there is no requirement for affordable units with regular subdivisions. For example, the Whipple Hill subdivision will provide no additional affordable units.

Gates felt the project would have some opposition from the commercial owners downstairs.

Fletcher said that the developer was going to look at a compromise where one building would be all residential and one building would be all commercial. Looking at the minutes of the meeting, there was an objection to having residential units upstairs from office uses.

Lentine said that this would be a project next to existing affordable rental uses.

Alden made a motion to ask the Zoning Board of Appeals to think about the Danvers Affordable Housing and allocate 20% of the units as affordable.

Bernson asked if there was an elevator in the building. Fletcher said that presently there are no elevators in the building, and she does not remember reading anything about this. Alden said if they change the use of the building, they may need an elevator.

Lentine seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

53 North Belgian Road (Susan Cunningham): Loan Repayment

Fletcher told the Board that Cunningham was sent a letter from the Trust indicating that they did not want to settle the debt at less than that was owed. Cunningham came in with a check for \$10,000 for part of the payment. Cunningham asked Fletcher to hire an appraiser, and the appraisal will be forwarded when complete. Fletcher reminded Cunningham that her loan would not become due until next year.

Gates asked how much she owed the Trust.

Fletcher said that she owed \$21,600.00. Gates confirmed that the note was reduced by \$10,000.

Alden asked where these funds were deposited, and Fletcher said that they went into DAHT's account with the Town.

26 Mill Street: SHI Update

Fletcher said that she spoke with Habitat and will work with them to get Mill Street on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). She told the Board that Coolidge Road will not go on the Town's SHI. They should be able to get one of the Mill Street units on the SHI.

Fletcher explained that Mill Street could not go on the SHI because the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) said that they had a local preference, even though the local preference was for people working in Danvers, not living in Danvers.

Bernson asked if this was new, and Fletcher said that she did not see where this regulation was in writing. Bernson thought this project would have counted on the SHI since they had a preapproved marketing plan.

Fletcher said that was what she was told several years ago. The usual approval process for inclusion in the SHI is for the project to be built and then the project is advertised and the selection process begins. Habitat, however, selects people before the units are complete. Habitat is one of the top three producing entities for affordable housing. Habitat met with DHCD a few years ago and came to a compromise in the process.

Alden said that they need to know what exactly they are looking for.

Fletcher said she has also been recently informed that the town needs to be approved in order to qualify for some local preference. They have a procedure of how this is justified through the demographics of the community.

Financial Reports

Fletcher told the Board that they are making more interest since the funds have been put into a different fund.

New Business

Lentine brought up the Town-owned lots, specifically the lot on Jalbert. She felt there was sufficient space for a home even though it was less than a one-half acre lot. There is 150 feet of frontage. Lentine said that David Harris pointed out that this lot did not have water in the street. Both houses on each side had wells. The houses have sewer, but they do not have water.

Lentine said that this was a 15,000 square foot lot in a 20,000 square foot zone. Fletcher pointed out that the house would need a variance. Lentine felt this lot did not look wet.

Alden asked how the Town ended up with this lot, and Fletcher responded that it was acquired by tax title. Gates asked how long the Town has owned it, and Lentine responded since 1985. Fletcher said this was part of a subdivision that did not get built out. Lentine said that it was a rectangular lot.

Fletcher said that since this was a Residential-II zone, they would have to look to see if they could build a two-family home. Gates asked if they could build a duplex on the lot. Lentine said that Residential-II allows single-family homes.

Lentine said she stopped by this lot with a colleague, and the neighbors came over to them and told them that a home cannot be built on the lot.

Lentine showed a picture of a 'tiny house' with loft space. Gates asked what the square footage was, and Lentine responded that it was usually less than 1,000 square feet.

Bernson felt if Habitat did the project, the Voke could still build it.

Alden asked what a 1,000 square foot home would be capped at to be considered an affordable house. Fletcher said that size does not matter. Bernson said that it was a formula.

Alden said that when the Trust dealt with Riverview and the developer bought Venice, the developer could only sell the unit for \$189,000. If we got a developer for a small lot, what is the maximum price that he could sell the house for? He felt this could be how they might be able to find a developer. The Trust cannot constantly rely on Habitat. As the industry is getting better, they may be able to get a builder that would be willing to do a small side job. Alden said that you could give the land to a developer and then tell him what the cap would be for a sales price. He would have to determine if he was going to be able to make a profit.

Lentine said that the lots at Woodland Road are selling for \$360,000 to \$370,000.

Fletcher said that giving the lot to the developer for free is a gift. There are no back taxes owed on parcels like Jalbert. Fletcher said that she confirmed this with Joe Collins, and he said the fees were nominal.

April Meeting Date and Agenda items

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously voted to schedule the next meeting on April 20, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Tish Lentine
Clerk