



DANVERS AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

TOWN HALL, DANVERS, MASSACHUSETTS 01923
TELEPHONE (978) 777-0001 FAX (978) 762-0215

TOWN MANAGER'S CONFERENCE ROOM Minutes February 21, 2018

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

Staff: Susan Fletcher and Francine Butler

Minutes of January 17, 2018

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously voted to approve the minutes of January 17, 2018 as written.

Danvers Community Council: Rental/Mortgage Assistance Program Renewal (Pam Parkinson)

Pam Parkinson introduced herself to the Board and told them that she is the liaison to the Town for the Community Council. She said that there is still a great need. There were 16 families/individuals where assistance was provided by the Danvers Affordable Housing Trust (DAHT). They have supported single mothers, single fathers, parents with multiple children and with disabled children. Some of these people have large out-of-pocket medical expenses. They have worked with elderly individuals that are on a fixed income. Parkinson explained that there are elderly people that have a good income, but the out-of-pocket expenses are so great that there becomes a hardship. There have been a couple of single women who have lost their housing due to health issues. One woman was living paycheck-to-paycheck. She was able to secure an apartment for \$800 a month that included electricity and heat. She had a minimum wage job at Target and would walk to work every day. She fell in bad weather and was injured, not able to work and lost her job. Another woman went out for a workman's compensation injury. She was terminated when she went back to her job.

Parkinson said that a lot of people think we are working with people that are looking for a hand out. The majority are people are living paycheck-to-paycheck. They have fallen on difficult circumstances that were not within their control. They see seniors that are no longer able to stay in their home and have to move to affordable housing. When they do get called on the housing list, the up-front expenses to move is large. One lady had a reverse mortgage and was living with an adult son who may have taken advantage of her

situation. She was in a position that she had nothing left. She did not have the money for a mover or the deposit for an electric bill.

Parkinson said that as part of her work with the Community Council, she is working with people of all ages all over Town. Community Council spent \$4,500 for housing needs, in addition to the funds allotted to them by the Trust. They have spent over \$7,000 for emergency needs, such as electric utilities and heat. There are a lot of needs, and without assistance from the DAHT, the Community Council could not have done this on its own. With Community Council there is a \$400 cap for each resident for their needs. They can ask for special permission if they need more money. They use many resources to fill the gaps and put the pieces of the puzzle together. Assistance is provided from the Community Council, DAHT and the Good Friday walk. St. Vincent DePaul has been a good help. They have been able to fill gaps and help people get back on their feet.

Calhoun confirmed that some of these funds are not for housing. Parkinson said that housing would include heat and electricity. Calhoun asked if any of their funds were used for non-housing things. Parkinson said no. It was her interpretation that the funds should be used to prevent homelessness.

Alden confirmed that this would be the Trust's third year partnering with Community Council. They have donated \$12,000 and \$15,000. Gates asked if it would be helpful if they received a little more. Alden asked where these funds came from. Fletcher said it was money from DAHT. Gates felt it would make sense to increase the amount to \$18,000.

Parkinson asked the Board if they wanted the funds used for things other than homelessness. The Board told her no.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously voted to allocate \$18,000 to Danvers Community Council to use for housing and people in need.

Habitat for Humanity Rehab Program: 466 Newbury Street Update

Don Preston from Habitat for Humanity appeared before the Board and told him that this project would not be going forward. Gates confirmed that this was for a mobile home.

Preston said that the owner of the property had not pulled permits to do the work. There is some discussion with the owner about being willing to work with them on a long-term basis.

Preston said that this trailer park is in very bad shape. The owner bought the property to knock it down and put up a building, but it was determined through State regulations that he would have to relocate everyone before he would be able to change the use of the property.

Fletcher said that this is one of the flaws in the legislation. There was no funding or incentive given for the property owner to invest money in it.

Calhoun asked who incurred the cost of the pad and the hookups. Preston said the landlord.

Preston said that the property had a unit on it at some point. The owner did not pull a permit to remove it. When the site was empty, it was no longer a legal lot. He would need to get permission to use it again. Something may develop, but he is not sure.

Calhoun asked how many units were in this park. Preston said there were about 30 units, and they are very old. There is no landscaping.

Lentine asked what they use for fuel and heat. Preston responded that it was propane.

5 Laurine Road Update (Don Preston)

Preston told the Board that the building is buttoned up. Essex Tech has been supplied with all the wood and materials. They are framing the windows and doors in their facility.

Calhoun said that there was an interesting article in the Danvers Magazine about the family that will be moving in.

Trask asked if they had any issues with the neighbors. Preston said that the neighbors are happy. They are working with an abutter to do a fence in the back.

Habitat Projects and our SHI Update

Preston told the Board that they are working with Fletcher, the consultant and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to get all these properties on the SHI. On Laurine Road they are waiting for a deed restriction to come in.

Preston said that there is a 20-year mortgage on 55 Coolidge Road. They have a deed restriction by the Home Consortium, and they believe that the DHCD will accept that.

Trask said that there was a discussion about having a Danvers preference. Preston said that Mill Street was okay since it was two units. By the time this Board meets again, these will be on the path of getting on the SHI.

Fletcher said that she would do a summary of what is missing and what is needed.

Alden asked where the entrance was for the handicapped entry at Laurine Road. Prentiss said it would be on the right side of the house. Alden felt it appeared to be 24 inches above the street. He asked Preston if there would be zero clearance at the entry of the home for a handicap access. Preston confirmed this.

114 Sylvan Street

Fletcher told the Board that when Mark and Chris Mscisz offered two units at 60% AMI, they discussed the importance of these units getting on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). The Trust told them that they would be willing to provide assistance to make this happen. The Board offered this in order to have more people open to the idea of providing affordable units.

C. Mscisz said that they went through 5 to 6 consultants, and they felt comfortable with Maureen O'Hagan who has done work in Danvers. He said that the estimate they had received to get these units on the SHI was \$15,000 to \$20,000.

M. Mscisz said that when they got involved with these units, they assumed that they would be able to work through the process, but realized that they needed a consultant. He pointed out that this fee includes their own participation in the screening of tenants.

Trask confirmed that this was the same consultant that did Holten Street.

M. Mscisz understands that the process is the process. Bernson pointed out that the invoice is the worst-case scenario. Fletcher said that this estimate was on the high-end.

C. Mscisz said that they understand about re-registering the units every year, but the large amount up-front was surprising.

Trask asked if the consultant that the Trust hired to get units on the DHCD could do this.

Fletcher told the Board that she and Bernson met to develop a boilerplate marketing plan to be offered to eliminate this expense.

M. Mscisz said that the marketing plan was less than one-third of that amount. He pointed out that these fees are in consideration of their participation.

C. Mscisz said that they are filling out as much paperwork as they can do. They will also screen and select the tenants.

Bernson confirmed that the consultant was doing the income qualification and the marketing plan.

M. Mscisz felt this fee was over-the-top.

King asked if the units were complete.

C. Mscisz said that the consultant indicated that it would take two months to get the units approved.

The Board was given a copy of the consultant's proposal.

C. Mscisz said that they jumped on getting started since they heard that it may take 2-3 months.

Trask polled the Board about assisting on this project. Calhoun said that the Trust has already stated that they would provide financial assistance in order to get the affordable units on the Town's SHI.

Gates asked if they were subsidizing or funding the whole cost. Alden said that was the decision they needed to make.

Alden suggesting subsidizing 50% of the cost not to exceed \$10,000 for both units.

M. Mscisz said that a boilerplate marketing plan could affect the amount of time needed. The consultant's time is paper filing and qualifying tenants. Maybe the Trust could help for a definitive outline of what needs to happen. We knew that this would be nominal and was going to involve a third-party relationship, but they did not realize the cost.

Fletcher pointed out that the same marketing plan could be used for different addresses.

Calhoun said that they want to find ways to streamline the process for developers.

M. Mscisz felt if there was to be a boilerplate template for the process for the steps for people to understand, maybe the price would drop.

Calhoun felt that there has to be a way that the Trust can work to streamline this process.

M. Mscisz asked if there could be a preferred vendor list for consultants.

Fletcher said that they do provide names of credible people.

Trask said that the Holten Street project presented a level of complexity and maybe they can help to minimize the process.

The motion that Alden made to subsidize 50% of the cost not to exceed \$10,000 for both units was seconded and unanimously approved.

40B Audits

Fletcher told the Board that she had nothing to new to report on this.

Financial Report

Gates went over the financial report with the Board.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously voted to approve the financials.

New Business

Trask said that last month Nick Pasciuto came before the Trust. They were going to try to develop 12 units on Maple Street and one unit would be at 70% of the AMI. The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) did not like the height and reduced the number of units. They will take the top floor off the design which means they will lose two units. The applicant would now like to bump up the affordability to 80% if they are only going to get 10 units.

Fletcher told the Board that McCann had called her about the ZBA meeting. McCann said that Trask arrived late to the meeting. One of the ZBA members said that they were concerned with the type of person that you would get at 70% AMI and was only comfortable allowing a unit at 80% AMI. The applicant said that they would do one unit at 80% AMI.

Trask said that he has not watched the ZBA meeting. When he entered the meeting, the discussion was about 10 units with one of them being at 80% AMI. Fletcher said that the 80% was coming from the ZBA.

There was a discussion about educating the ZBA about the percentages and showing them what the rents are for the different percentages.

Trask said that he was taken aback at the last DAHT meeting when Pasciuto said that if the unit was at 80% AMI, he would raise the rent. Trask said that he did not mind going back and submitting a new letter to them. He wants to see what the comments were.

Trask said that he wants the letter to say that they would accept 80% of the AMI as long as the rents are not more than what the other rents are.

Bernson pointed out that the rent includes utilities.

Trask asked if Pasciuto is including utilities in his rental charge or are they paid separately.

Trask wants to be clear that 80% of the AMI includes utilities.

Fletcher said that the amount of the rent will be established through the process.

Trask asked the Board to watch the tape of the ZBA meeting and to let Fletcher know if they should have a meeting to discuss this. Before the ZBA meeting, he would like to work on what the letter would be or whether they should even change it.

Calhoun said that they have not been asked by the developer for a new letter. Trask said he was asked at the ZBA meeting.

Calhoun felt there should be some communication from the DAHT to the ZBA.

Bernson said that they could draft a letter of clarification regarding the 70% since the ZBA had some concerns about the income levels.

Trask said that he has reached out as an individual about increasing affordable housing. They are only allowed to apply inclusionary zoning if the project goes before the Planning Board for a Special Permit. In the language of the bylaws, it states that both Boards can take action if there is a detriment to the Town. Bartha said he would talk to Town Counsel. Trask said that developers get around this by doing a variance or a finding. He would like to see if there is a tool or mechanism to encourage both Boards to consider that.

Fletcher said that they could include a requirement in the zoning for single-family home developments.

Fletcher said one good part is that the Maple Street area will have a 20% affordability requirement.

Bernson said that the idea is that they would retain the services of a consultant. Between the two cities, they could get the marketing plan approved. Moving forward there would be a fee schedule for the costs. The developers will know up front what the cost will be to do this. They are trying to comply with the regulations and make it more affordable. She does not want people not to do this.

It was agreed that the boilerplate would be sent to the consultant.

Trask asked if the intent was to have the consultant create the boilerplate and process documents or guide the process to the DHCD. Bernson said they would ask for both.

Calhoun felt that they were ahead of other affordable housing trusts that are around.

Trask felt they would be providing a resource to developers. He asked if they want a list of preferred vendors. He is concerned with the consultant.

Bernson said that the consultant would be on retainer for a year. If you use the services, these are the prices that you could pay.

Fletcher said that the marketing plan would belong to them. A person could use their own consultant if they wanted to.

Lentine said she went to a Wenham housing meeting. They did an open meeting at the Senior Center. There were about 75 people there. They need 18 additional units to get to the 10% threshold. It was round table discussion, and she found it interesting. Lentine read some of the questions that were asked at the meeting.

Next Meeting Date

The Board decided that the next regular meeting of the DAHT would be on March 21, 2018.

King thought it would be good to schedule a tentative date for the meeting to discuss Maple Street if needed. It was decided to have that meeting on March 7th if needed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Tish Lentine, Clerk