



Town of Danvers Danvers Affordable Housing Trust

1 Sylvan Street, Danvers, Massachusetts 01923 | p: 978-777-0001

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Minutes May 15, 2019

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

Staff: Susan Fletcher and Francine Butler

3 Jalbert Lane

Trask described what the Trust did. He told them about the property at 5 Laurine Road. The Trust purchased the property from the Town and then issued a RFP from developers to build affordable housing similar to the homes in the neighborhood. They started looking at properties in Town and saw the parcel at 3 Jalbert Lane, which was taken by the Town in 1956. This has remained unused for many years.

Trask said that the Trust would purchase the land from the Town of Danvers. The Request for Proposal (RFP) sets out the guidelines for building the house. It needs to conform to the neighborhood. They are looking at a single-family home. They reached out to the abutters. At the last Selectmen's meeting it was mentioned what the Trust was looking to do. The intent was to purchase the land with HOME funding.

Fletcher said that they are looking for input from the abutters for the best outcome possible. She has spoken with two abutters and tried to address their concerns. The final decision to transfer this property to the Trust will be made by the Board of Selectmen. They would not need zoning relief to build a home on this property. They may need to go to the Conservation Commission. Whoever is the developer of the lot will know where to place the house since they are going to have a wetland scientist delineate the wetlands.

Beth Rennard, 38 Riverview Avenue. Rennard asked if this property should go to auction since it was taken for tax purposes.

Fletcher said that this parcel was taken as land of low value. Since this was taken for low value, Town Counsel has opined that the Town Treasurer can transfer the parcel to the Board of Selectmen. They can then vote to transfer the property to the Trust. They would then do a Request for Proposal.

Rennard asked if they were looking at two properties.

Fletcher said that the second property is more complicated.

Alden said that the other property is not suitable for a three-bedroom unit.

Trask said they are looking for a lot to build a single-family lot, and the zoning in this area is for a single-family home.

Rennard said that there was no Town water on that street. All the homes have wells.

Trask said that this would not be predicated on Town water. Fletcher said that she will speak with the DPW about this issue.

Rennard said that they are concerned about the water that puddles in the area. A river runs through the back yard when it rains. She asked if an environmental study would be done.

Alden said that the Trust would have to go to the Conservation Commission for a determination. They will tell us what will need to be done to build. There will be some professional people involved in the process.

Stephen Casagrande, 4 Jalbert Lane. Casagrande showed pictures that demonstrated how the flooding is a major issue. His home has been flooded. He installed an artesian well. The water makes a skating rink during the winter. When the topography of a neighborhood is changed, there will be a lot of ramifications that would not be good.

Gael McManus, 4 Jalbert Lane. McManus showed the Board the orientation of the homes to the flooding.

Trask said that this is a concern to look at.

Casagrande asked if there had been an environmental study.

Fletcher said that there may not be a need for an environmental review since it is a single-family home. The water is coming towards the lot they are talking about.

Richard Rennard, 38 Riverview Avenue. R. Rennard said that there was a determination made for his lot and the lot behind his that it was considered a wetland. He was told that no one would be able to build on that lot.

Fletcher said that unfortunately sometimes people will say things due to wetlands or occasional flooding. Wetlands does not mean that you cannot build anything. It governs how you have to build. It may limit any building.

Rennard asked if the existing trees would remain. Fletcher said that it could be added to the RFP.

David Jalbert, 5 Jalbert Lane. Jalbert said that he was one of the original developers. He paid for the cul-de-sac and for bringing the water down to Jalbert Lane. He went through a lot with the Town to build his house. He was told the lot was wetlands, and it would never be built on. He needed to get a variance to build the house since he had to pull it forward so it would not be in the wetlands. He has been occupying some of the Town property for over 20 years. He has been cutting the lawn and taking care of the trees. He is going to lose almost 90% of his front yard. He has been cutting the fields to the

playground for over 15 years. They try to look out for neighbors. His driveway has sunk twice. There is a lot of clay so the water sits on the surface.

Fletcher said that it is important to have a wetland scientist look at this.

Jalbert said that he had to build his house up. A lot of the water comes down the center section.

Fletcher asked the abutters if they would be interested in having the water line extended. Jalbert said he refused it. He wanted a well. All the abutters preferred the wells.

Gates asked if most of the houses had wells.

McManus said that most people have wells from where the road thins.

Trask said that they are sympathetic to the neighbors.

Jalbert said that the way his house is situated, the house is facing down Jalbert Lane. The front of the house is 15 feet from the property line.

Trask said that they would be sympathetic to that fact. They are trying to conform to the neighborhood.

Lentine asked if any of the abutters had flood insurance. They did not. Bernson confirmed that they were not in a flood zone.

Trask explained the affordability calculation to the audience. This will not be a low-income home. They are going to own the house and pay taxes. They are going to be your neighbors.

Rennard said that affordability is not the issue. They all have been there. The issue is flooding. The proximity of water to our houses. There is wildlife and nature. That is why they bought this lot. They were told this lot was wet and Town property. It is not about an affordable unit in our neighborhood.

Monique Jalbert, 5 Jalbert Lane. Jalbert said that there are deer, fox, rabbit and coyotes in the area. They have seen five deer at their house.

Casagrande said that he reviewed previous minutes. On November 28, 2018, it was said that this property was controlled by Open Space. In January the minutes stated that Jalbert was part of a cluster subdivision that remained as Open Space.

Alden said that they were talking about the land going towards the park.

Trask said it was the big parcel between Bradstreet Avenue and your backyards.

Casagrande said that the minutes of September, November and January said that you could not build a home on this lot.

Fletcher explained that they were referring to the Bradstreet lot.

Trask said it was the large open land that went down to the playground.

Trask said that Jalbert was the most straight forward lot. They know they need to determine the reality of the wetlands. They are committed as a Trust to follow the rules. They are not experts.

Rennard asked if the wetland delineation would be done before going to the Board of Selectmen's meeting.

Fletcher said that it would be done afterwards. If the Trust is not allowed to purchase the land, there is no need to spend the money. They need to know that the Selectmen are open to the idea of doing it.

Trask said that a developer would do the up-front work.

Fletcher said that there are times that permits are obtained before land is purchased. We would be looking for a commitment from the Town that if the lot turns out to be not buildable than the Trust will not be obligated to purchase the property.

Rennard asked about the value of the property. Has an appraisal been done of the property?

Fletcher said that they are proposing to pay half of the assessed value of the property which is around \$128,000.

Casagrande asked if an appraisal had been done.

Fletcher said that they talked about doing an appraisal for what is being proposed and what the lot would be worth on the open market. She met with the Town Assessor and it was decided that the assessed value would be used.

Jalbert said that they wanted to buy this land. They approached the Town, but the Town did not want to sell.

Rennard asked if there was a written opinion from Town Counsel regarding the low value valuation.

Fletcher responded no. She pointed out that it was not uncommon for some of Town Counsel's opinions to be verbal.

Fletcher said that they did a title search for this property.

Casagrande confirmed that if the land appraised at \$250,000 the Trust was only going to pay \$125,000.

Fletcher said that this is for an affordable unit. They are asking that the land be less than market value. It fulfills a need for affordable housing in the community. There is a mandate that the Town needs to have 10% of their housing stock affordable. When they did a housing production plan, they were advised to investigate land taken by the Town for taxes. Most housing now is rental. It is much harder to create affordable ownership opportunities within the community.

Fletcher said that they developed two other lots, and the Trust paid nothing for the land.

Rennard asked what was the next step?

Fletcher said they would be going to the Board of Selectmen.

Rennard asked when that was.

Fletcher said that they have a tentative meeting on the first Tuesday in June.

Trask said that Lentine produced a picture with a potential home on the lot.

Lentine said that there may not be a building envelope with the amount of water that is there.

Casagrande said that he has made adjustments to his home for flooding not to happen. He does not want it happening again if a home is built.

Trask asked whether the source of the water was from the property above or behind them.

R. Rennard said that the water was coming from the north, south, east and west.

Gates felt this was a collection area.

R. Rennard said that if hardscape is put in, and the swale is taken away, water will go towards their property.

Jalbert has lived there his whole life. They used to skate on a pond of water.

Fletcher said that the Conservation Commission policies and regulations require that drainage is reviewed and that no additional drainage can leave the property.

Jalbert said that the Rennards will be more affected by this. He can see water going into his yard.

Fletcher said that the engineer would look at this.

R. Rennard said that you will recommend either to build or not. He suggested bringing their engineers to the site.

Casagrande said that they keep their properties looking nice. Based on experience of living down there, they know what they are talking about.

Trask said that the Trust is a committee formed for a purpose, and they look to see how they can meet the Trust mandate. The Board of Selectmen are going to vote. He is on the Board of Selectmen. There will be an open meeting where you can offer your concerns. Representatives from the Trust will be at the meeting to offer the proposal. The issues of flooding, topography, the well and the trees to remain will be put into the RFP.

Casagrande asked if they were going to recommend this to the Selectmen?

Trask said that the Trust will vote tonight.

R. Rennard asked how they can vote when you are the only one that went down to look at the property?

Other Board members told him that they went down individually.

M. Jalbert said they need to go down and look at the mud and flooding. There are puddles and it has not even been raining hard.

Fletcher said that they have had a wet April and May. If the Board votes to go to the Selectmen, it would be conditioned to do other research to be cleared up before they can actually do it.

Trask said that they can commit the funding by the end of June and go through the process. If it falls through, the money will go back to the HOME Consortium.

Gates said that they still have to spend the money for the environmental reviews. He confirmed that the funds would come from the Trust.

Fletcher said that is true if the Trust votes to continue to recommend it.

Alden motioned to go forward to the Board of Selectmen for a vote to sell this property with a condition that if they purchase the land they could build a home on the lot.

Gates said that he understood the abutter's concerns and felt that they had a serious problem.

Trask said he understood their concerns.

Lentine said that she heard their concerns.

Lentine seconded the motion because she is confident in the process to bring it to the right decision. It may be proven that this is not a buildable lot. Their goal is to provide affordable units. If this is not doable, they will move on.

Alden said that they can go through the process and exercise. If it does not work out, maybe the problem can be corrected. Going through the steps will bring it to the right purpose.

Casagrande said that the DPW repaved the area last fall and tried to take care of the water issues.

King asked for the motion to be repeated.

Trask said that they will move forward to the Board of Selectmen for the purchase of this property with the condition that it is a buildable lot.

The vote was 5 to 1. Gates opposed the motion.

Rennard asked if public comment was allowed at the Selectmen's meeting.

Trask said that there is a public hearing. He said that they would talk to the chairman to be listed as a public hearing.

Minutes of April 17, 2019

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously voted to approve the minutes of April 1, 2019.

20 Locust Street

Fletcher told the Board that Carnevale was not interested in talking with the Trust. His attorney said that money is running tight, and he did not want to discuss amending the income levels for the affordable units..

5 Laurine Road Title

Fletcher said that she heard from Town Counsel. The owner, Gass, had an orderly will that left the property to his two sons and wife. The wife has passed away, and the two sons were contacted and agreed to sign the document relinquishing all rights to the Town. The title insurance company said that they will accept this.

Vacancy on the Trust

Fletcher said that there was a candidate in the talent pool. Bartha needs to have the Selectmen appoint her. Trask said he would contact Bartha for this to be put on the Board of Selectmen agenda. Fletcher pointed out that this candidate was an attorney.

Financial Report

Fletcher said that the report showed a payment to Liz Rust. She said that Rust was going to develop a guide for developers to know what they need to do to get a property on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). They got a wonderful tutorial that has been given to the Planning Board and the Building Inspector for the ZBA. It notes the conditions that should be placed on a property. Bernson volunteered to summarize it and gear it to developers of small projects.

Alden said that he noticed a payment to the Trust in the amount of \$7,500. Fletcher said that this was Colantoni's payment for the property at 25 Cherry Street.

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

Old Business

Fletcher said that this was her last meeting. Aaron Henry will be the staff support for the Trust.

New Business

Bernson confirmed that money would have to be spent for the Trust to do their due diligence for the property at 3 Jalbert Lane. Fletcher said that the high side would be \$1,500 for a wetland delineation. Bernson said that they do want to do this before they purchase the property.

Fletcher pointed out that the Selectmen could say no.

Trask asked if they should authorize money contingent upon the decision of the Board of Selectmen. Alden said that they are not opposed to voting on this. He asked what would happen if the amount came back as \$2,200?

Trask said that they could authorize the amount not to exceed \$3,000 for the wetland delineation. He pointed out that the Selectmen's meeting was only two weeks before their next meeting in June. They would not have to do this since they would not be saving time.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, June 19, 2019.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Tish Lentine, Clerk