

MINUTES

Boxborough Housing Board

Thursday, December 10, 2015

7:30 PM

Sargent Memorial Library Meeting Room, 427 Massachusetts Avenue

Housing Board Members Present: Al Murphy, Chair, Michael Fetterman, Ron Vogel

Others Present: Adam Duchesneau, Town Planner, Neal Hesler, Carolyn Read – Habitat for Humanity, Kevin O’Brien – Habitat for Humanity

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 PM.

I. Discussion with Habitat for Humanity Regarding 405 Middle Road

Ms. Read provided an overview of the Habitat for Humanity area of work and current projects. She indicated they prefer to build two houses per year. Ms. Read stated their homes go to households which have an income between 30% and 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). She also added that for a household to receive a Habitat for Humanity home there has to be a size need (in terms of size and condition of the household) and a willingness to partner with Habitat for Humanity (to put sweat equity into the project). Ms. Read indicated applicants are evaluated on financial criteria, home visits, and their application.

Mr. Fetterman asked if households who are partnering with Habitat for Humanity could eventually become owners of the homes. Ms. Read indicated this could happen if the household were to pay off the mortgage, which are typically 30 to 40 years. Mr. O’Brien added that Habitat for Humanity also does critical home repairs for those households which have incomes between 20% and 80% of the AMI. Ms. Read noted the homes Habitat for Humanity constructs are typically around 1,200 square feet and some have basements. She added that their houses are deeded as affordable in perpetuity. Mr. Duchesneau indicated he could do some additional research to get more information about where the wells and septic systems are located on surrounding properties.

Mr. Vogel asked what the next steps in the process should be. Ms. Read stated it would be necessary to figure out where the other wells and septic systems are located on the adjacent lots to determine if a well and septic system could be placed at the subject property. She also noted a percolation test for the property should probably be performed as well. Mr. Vogel asked what other information the Board of Selectmen were looking for and Mr. Murphy stated they were seeking details regarding affordability levels and the application process. Mr. Hesler felt the Town should pay to have a percolation test for the property completed whether the Board of Selectmen decided to put the property up for auction or attempt to work with a nonprofit developer. He indicated the Town should know what the limitations of the property are and performing a percolation test would help the Town understand what options there are for the parcel.

Mr. Murphy noted the Affordable Housing Trust might be willing to pay for a percolation test if the Town did not want to do this. Mr. Hesler suggested the Housing Board should ask

the Board of Selectmen to perform the percolation testing or perhaps Mr. Duchesneau could ask the developer for the Jefferson at Beaver Brook project if they could be of any assistance in this matter. Mr. Hesler also felt there would be substantial benefits to the community in working with an entity such as Habitat for Humanity on this project.

II. Minutes

A. Minutes from November 11, 2015

The meeting minutes from November 11, 2015 were approved on a MOTION by Mr. Fetterman and SECONDED by Mr. Vogel, with all members voting in favor.

III. Old Business

A. Regional Housing Services CPC Application

Mr. Vogel noted the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) had interesting discussions on many of the CPC applications at their last meeting. He indicated the main concern with the Regional Housing Services application had to do with the timing of the funding. Mr. Duchesneau elaborated on this noting there may be an issue with using future fiscal year funds to pay for past fiscal year invoices. Mr. Vogel felt the obvious answer was to put Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds into the Affordable Housing Trust and then use that money to pay for Year 3 of the Regional Housing Services contract. Mr. Murphy agreed and felt any Town Meeting transparency concerns could be easily eliminated by simply making it a requirement that the allocated funding only be spent on the Regional Housing Services.

B. Rental Voucher Program CPC Application

Mr. Vogel noted the CPC was concerned with the projected overhead costs of running the program. He indicated the CPC specifically noted that \$18,000 would be going to the renters participating in the program, but approximately \$8,000 would be spent just to administer the program. Mr. Hesler asked if any votes were taken on any of the CPC applications that evening. Mr. Vogel indicated some applications were voted on and others were continued to the next meeting with requests for more information. He continued on to note that the CPC thought the Rental Voucher Program was a good idea, but they wanted more information on the administrative details of the program. There was then a discussion regarding the CPA funding allocation categories and the budgeted reserve.

IV. New Business

A. Craftsman Village Cost Certification

The Housing Board reviewed MassHousing's draft Cost Certification Analysis report. Mr. Murphy noted the Housing Board does not have a lot of authority to adjust the document, but if the Board had any questions or comments, they should be directed to MassHousing through the Town Planner. Mr. Murphy indicated that Housing Board member Joan Meyer (who was not in attendance) had noted there was a 5% commission to the selling agent for the units, but typically the commission is around 2% for the sale of affordable dwelling units. Mr. Murphy asked if Mr. Duchesneau could look into this matter with MassHousing. Mr. Fetterman pointed out the real estate fees for the project were coming out in the realm of normal.

B. Housing Board Meetings for 2016

The Housing Board reviewed the draft 2016 meeting dates which Mr. Murphy had proposed. Mr. Murphy noted the only date which appeared to possibly be an issue was the May 2016 meeting date due to the Annual Town Meeting potentially continuing for three evenings. After some discussion, the Housing Board decided to retain this meeting date and to adjust it if needed as the date got closer.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM on a MOTION by Mr. Vogel and SECONDED by Mr. Fetterman, with all members voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Adam Duchesneau.