

CAMBRIDGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST  
MEETING MINUTES  
April 26, 2018

Ackerman Room, Cambridge City Hall  
795 Massachusetts Ave.

Trustees Present: Louis DePasquale, Chair; Peter Daly, Gwen Noyes, Cheryl-Ann Pizza-Zeoli, Jim Stockard, Elaine Thorne, Bill Tibbs

Trustees Absent: Florrie Darwin, Susan Schlesinger

Staff Present: Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for Community Development; Chris Cotter, Housing Director; Cassie Arnaud, Housing Planner; Linda Prosnitz, Housing Planner

OTHERS: City Councilor Sumbul Siddiqui

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, February 22, 2018 with one modification that Jim Stockard was absent from the meeting.

## **PROJECT UPDATE**

**2072 Mass. Ave.** – The site was acquired by Capstone/Hope in April 2018.

**Squirrelwood New construction** – Just A Start received a comprehensive permit in February for 23 new units as part of the consolidation/renovation of Linwood and Squirrel Brand Apartments.

**Vail Court** - Court approved the City's request to demolish the buildings, but the broader litigation remains ongoing.

**Frost Terrace** - Capstone's application for a comp permit to create 40 new units in Porter Sq was approved at the BZA and an application for state funding was submitted in February.

**Concord Ave** – Moving towards closing on the site work in May and full construction in late summer.

**Jefferson Park State Public Housing** – Construction is approaching completion.

**Homebridge Program** – Two units have closed since the pilot for buyers up to 120% began in 2017.

**Inclusionary Program** - One rental unit on Chauncy Street, one of the Chestnut Hill Realty basement units, was added to the portfolio this month.

## **UPDATES**

CDD budget includes requests for an additional staff person for the inclusionary program and funds for the next incentive study.

The preference subcommittee of the Trust will have one more meeting. The subcommittee has been discussing possible changes and how to balance the preferences for residents, families with children and those with emergency needs. The preferences for inclusionary rental and homeownership can be decided through internal processes. However, there is push back from funders of developments financed by the Trust about how we maximize local preference and how that continues perpetually. The state now wants one-time local preference. The state is also concerned that local preference doesn't include those who work in Cambridge. HRI is working on a solution which will be discussed in relationship to Concord Highlands.

Next week is the Affordable Housing Week of Action. A number of events are planned. Among these will be a poster exhibit at City Hall with photos and quotes from residents in affordable rental and homeownership units, a book discussion on "Evicted", a rally and celebration event for inclusionary on Saturday.

Metro Mayors Housing Task Force of the inner core communities is making good progress. The group is compiling best practices from across the country, including from Cambridge in the areas of funding, inclusionary and overlay districts. Legislative action may come out of the task force. The group is also looking at demographic patterns and job growth to come up with regional targets for different types of housing, affordability levels, and types of households.

Envision – Meetings are being held with working groups. The Housing Group will meet next week to finalize recommendations and those will be referred to the larger group for inclusion in the broader plan. The Trust discussed how it is difficult to balance competing priorities, such as housing, open space, and bicycles. One of the strongest recommendations from the Housing Group is for a zoning overlay for affordable housing. One of the other recommendations being discussed is greater density along the corridors. The Trust discussed the need to show how greater density can be workable. Utile will be illustrating this. Parking was also discussed as one variable that might ease density by allowing for lower ratios.

The Next Housing Committee meeting is May 15.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Concord Highlands:

HRI is preparing to close on the first phase of construction and needs to finalize the tenant selection plan for the project. The tenant selection plan must be approved not only by the City, but also by DHCD, MassHousing, and HUD. The Trust voted in February 2018 to make funding conditional on staff approval of a tenant selection plan with provisions ensuring at least 70% local preference. DHCD and MassHousing have agreed to this; however, DHCD has raised issues about maintaining the preference over time. DHCD is requiring the following language be added to the Tenant Selection Plan to address their concerns:

Maintaining Local Preference Beyond Initial Lease-Up

*Concord Highlands will maintain a 70/30 local preference for the life of the property, but this preference will be subject to evaluation and potential adjustments every five years. This evaluation will entail comparing the racial and ethnic demographics of current residents of the property to the racial and ethnic demographics of the open-preference waiting list and of the applicable surrounding HUD-defined area. Due to the randomization of the lottery process, it is not guaranteed that the racial and ethnic demographics of Concord Highlands will match the waiting lists precisely. However, if the discrepancy is greater than 20 percent it could indicate non-random disparate impact and merit adjustment. In such a case, we would notify both the City of Cambridge and DHCD and would take measures to avoid such disparate impact, subject to approval by the City of Cambridge and DHCD.*

The Trust discussed that HRI would be able to monitor this over time.

Upon a motion moved and seconded, it was

VOTED: To approve inclusion of language in the Tenant Selection Plan on addressing local preference beyond the initial lease up.

Housing Preservation

Staff requested up to \$25,00 in Trust funds to be used to continue efforts to preserve expiring use properties. Funds would be used for activity such as capital needs assessment, appraisals, as well as consulting services. Housing Preservation funding has so far enabled the City to preserve eight at risk properties. Funds requested now will most immediately help to work with Fresh Pond Apartments. Progress is being made with the owner.

Upon a motion moved and seconded, it was

VOTED: to approve the staff's request for up to \$25,000 in Trust funding to be used for housing preservation activities.

Materials:

- Memo on Tenant Selection Plan for Concord Highlands
- Request for funds for Housing Preservation
- Meeting Minutes from the Trust's February 18, 2018 meeting.
- Project Update