

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF

April 12, 2016

Brookline Town Hall – Room 310

(as approved by the Housing Advisory Board at the meeting of May 17, 2016)

Members Present: Roger Blood, Steve Heikin, Karen Kepler, Bill Madsen Hardy,
Kathy Spiegelman

Staff Present: Virginia Bullock, Joe Viola

Members of the Public: Henry Winkelman

Minutes:

Roger Blood called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Members reviewed the minutes of the February 11th HAB meeting. Bill Madsen Hardy MOVED, Steve Heikin seconded, and the Board then

VOTED to accept the minutes of the February 11, 2016 HAB meeting.

FY17 HOME and CDBG Funding Updates

Virginia noted that in FY17 the Town would receive approximately \$194,493 in HOME funds, of which \$176,812 is identified for projects or programs – almost level funding from FY16. The Town is currently scheduled to repay Waltham back the remainder of a loan (for the Dummer Street project) with these funds. The Town has also received \$237,215 in program income from homebuyer loans repaid that will need to be committed by June/July of this year. In addition, the Town will not draw down approximately \$32,000 in HOME funds from the Dummer Street project, due to cost savings, which will also need to be committed by June.

Virginia noted that she has explored the possibility of committing FY16 HOME program income to the BHA to undertake several key capital projects at their Trustman development. Priority projects there include masonry repair, new roofing, and rehabilitation of the community room and offices. As much of the development has been modernized over the past decade, these remaining capital projects will bring the property standards to a high level in compliance with the HOME requirements. Members expressed willingness to explore this and asked for a more developed proposal to be brought to the next meeting.

Virginia went over the housing recommendations for FY17 CDBG funding. She noted that no proposal had been submitted for the affordable housing program, as the Planning Director wanted to focus the Department's request on the Gateway East project. The BHA requested \$568,866 for capital improvements of which \$250,000 was recommended by the CDBG Committee.

Housing Production Plan Update

Roger noted that the first community workshop had been held and 48 members of the public had participated. The working committee had met several times and was in the process of reviewing a draft of the Needs and Goals section of the plan. The next phase of the project will be to identify site selection criteria and then identify actual sites that meet the criteria as good places to build affordable housing. Members discussed turn-out and identified new strategies to reach additional residents.

Roger passed out a schematic for ranking site selection criteria which will feed into specific sites and creating a range of units on each site. He noted that various configurations of identified sites will get

the Town to the 10% goal. Ultimately the Selectmen need to approve the final Housing Production Plan and send it along to DHCD for approval and eventually certification, once the threshold is met.

Kathy asked how the current 40B projects will be considered in the HPP. Members noted that these projects can be identified. Roger responded that, once 40B applications have begun the ZBA hearing process, they cannot be counted for temporary 'safe harbor' credit under the HPP.

Steve noted that the biggest concern of residents seems to be about building height.

Roger noted that in other communities they have had architects on their teams who could lead visioning session.

Steve noted that we are looking more for a site capacity study of key parcels.

Karen asked if there were draft criteria for HAB members to consider.

Roger encouraged members to make suggestions that could be brought back to the consultants.

Members suggested that sites be: transit-oriented and walkable (but not exclusively); tied into what is surrounding it; provides transitioning density; and focused on underutilized sites in commercial districts for mixed use. Members suggested looking at past successful affordable housing projects such as St. Aiden's and Olmsted Hill as examples of how affordable housing can fit well within neighborhood contexts.

Possible Senior Housing Development on Town-owned Kent/Station Street Parking Lot

Roger noted that he wanted to have a more thorough discussion at the next HAB meeting about the possibility of building senior housing on the Town-owned Kent/Station Street Parking Lot. Over the past month, there have been several meetings with Henry Winkelman, Tom Nutt-Powell, Pat Dober, Frank Caro, Selectman Daly and former Selectman Goldstein to discuss the possibility of such a project and to gauge potential feasibility and interest.

Both Nancy Daley and Ken Goldstein are interested in this initiative and have encouraged the HAB to explore this further. It is possible that BIC may also play a role, although HAB noted that the project would not require a non-profit sponsor if a developer RFP were put out by the Town. Since the parking lot is town-owned, it would require a majority Town Meeting approval, though not the 2/3 vote required for zoning changes. Members discussed the need to include this site in the Housing Production Plan and asked if other Town-owned lots should also be included.

Update/Discussion on Proposed 40B Proposals:

Virginia reviewed the five 40B projects listed on the agenda. Members asked if other communities were also facing a high number of 40B proposals. Both Roger and Virginia stated that many communities in the Greater Boston area are experiencing intense development pressure, driven by the tremendously strong real estate market. While some communities are receiving 40B proposals, others are facing a high volume of as-of-right development projects or both, including Brookline.

Virginia discussed the number of units proposed and status of each proposed 40B project. She stated that a letter from the HAB had gone to the Selectmen to be included in the request for local comments on project eligibility. She asked if HAB members wanted to get more involved in commenting on projects specifics such as project massing and context. The Town has always tried to have its affordable housing developments fit contextually within their neighborhoods. Roger noted

that in the past the HAB has focused only on issues related to affordability and not delved into issues such as massing, height, density, or design.

Several members expressed concern about several aspects of the Selectmen's letters to the subsidizing agencies, particularly the comments which requested the developer to focus on senior housing and/or to increase parking. These are housing policy decisions that the HAB should be involved in deciding; also, that might be antithetical to building smaller projects. Members discussed the parking issue as it relates to affordable housing development, noting that in the past the Town has generally required one parking space for each affordable unit.

Some members felt that in transit-oriented locations, no required parking would be acceptable, and that parking only attracts more cars and traffic. Bill noted that the cost of parking is not allowed by any state subsidy program.

Members then discussed the issue of senior versus family housing and agreed that there was tremendous unmet need in both categories. Members agreed that the Town's policy is not to prioritize senior housing over family housing, or vice versa; rather, that the Town needs both.

Members asked to have more specific discussion on the projects as they come forward in the process.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.