

HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
May 28, 2019
Brookline Town Hall – Room 111
(As approved at HAB meeting of June 26, 2019)

Members: Roger Blood, Steve Heikin, Michael Jacobs, Bill Madsen Hardy, Jennifer Raitt

Staff: Virginia Bullock, Edward Bates, David Guzman

Guests: Andy Martineau, Chestnut Hill Realty
Patrick Dober, Brookline Housing Authority

Roger Blood called the meeting to order at 7:34PM

1. Approval of minutes from the March 26, 2019 meeting

HAB members **VOTED** unanimously to approve the minutes from the March 26, 2019 meeting. Jennifer Raitt abstained from the vote as she'd not been at that meeting.

2. June 5th Select Board's Sustainability and Climate Action Summit HAB members encouraged to attend

Edward Bates stated that Zoe Lynn, the Town's new Sustainability Program Administrator asked him to speak to the HAB on the Town's upcoming Sustainability and Climate Action Summit. The Summit is being held on Wednesday, June 5th at the Coolidge Corner School and HAB members are encouraged to attend.

3. Affordable Housing proposal by CHR for five Inclusionary Zoning units at Gerry Building, Hancock Village (40A project currently under review by Planning Board)

Virginia stated that Inclusionary Zoning cash obligations are processed administratively but when there are actual on site units, approval for the plan is required by the HAB as part of the ZBA approval process. Andy Martineau, Development Project Manager for Chestnut Hill Realty, then presented a PowerPoint to the HAB on the Gerry Building Project at Hancock Village. He explained that CHR has been meeting with the Town's Planning Board and Design Advisory Team over the last few months concerning this project.

Andy noted that the plan calls for the newly constructed Gerry Building to have a 36-space parking garage underneath and 36 residential units built above. The floor plan includes 16 one bedroom units and 20 two bedroom units. The affordable units are as follows:

- 1st Floor – 2 Bedroom Unit – 1144 Sq. ft.
- 1st Floor – 1 Bedroom Unit – 759 Sq. ft.
- 2nd Floor – 2 Bedroom Unit – 904 Sq. ft.
- 2nd Floor – 1 Bedroom Unit – 759 Sq. ft.
- 3rd Floor - 2 Bedroom Unit – 904 Sq. ft.

Bill Madsen Hardy asked if the Town's regulations require the affordable units to meet minimum square footage requirements or is it mandatory to be representative in size to other units in the project. Virginia

stated that the Town wants the units to fit with the rest of the development and while there is a minimum number in the Town's by-law, there is flexibility as well. Bill added that two of the smallest two bedroom affordable units are much smaller than the market rate units and stated his view that they should be comparable in size. Andy specified the formula to find the correct size for the affordable units is to take the average size of the market rate units and also the specified square footage in the zoning with the minimum allowable size being the lesser of the two values.

Andy observed that each of these units will have one bathroom as the Town's bylaw requires only one bathroom for one and two bedroom units in affordable units. Jennifer Raitt stated that it would be preferable to see an additional bathroom, half bathroom, or storage space for the affordable 2 bedroom units. Roger stated that while the HAB cannot require these additions, it would be preferable to at least include extra walled-off storage space.

Bill noted that the HAB should review the Inclusionary Zoning Policy in the future to change it such that the size of affordable units are comparable to the market rate units. Steve Heikin specified that language in the policy should not require exact comparisons in unit size but should focus on the affordable units being located appropriately within the project. He added that the 2 bedroom unit on the 2nd floor near the elevator should be moved to the south-facing side of the building.

Mike Jacobs MOVED and Jennifer Raitt SECONDED

VOTED: To approve the plan for the five inclusionary zoning units at the Gerry Building, Hancock Village (40A project currently under review by Planning Board) subject to the 2nd Floor 2 bedroom unit located near the elevator is moved to the south side of the building and that the 1st floor larger 2 bedroom unit provide an additional full bath, a half bath, or storage space in the event that the market rate units receive a second bathroom.

ALL APPROVED

Andy mentioned that if these requests from the HAB cannot be fulfilled, he will come back to the HAB again for further review. Virginia added that the affordable units will be subject to LIP deed-riders and in the event that a resident in one of these units income goes above 140% AMI, the affordable units will float to another unit.

4. Review of proposal from Pam McKinney for proposed changes to Inclusionary Zoning By-Law

Roger stated that a few meetings ago, the HAB reviewed a draft scope of services from Pam McKinney to provide consultant services on the reevaluation of the Town's Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw. The Scope of Services now represents a clear understanding of the level of counseling services she will provide. Ken Lewis from EDAB will also provide free advice and assistance to this project if requested. Before voting, the HAB discussed that in section 2 of the scope of services, the word "assess" should be replaced with "as determined by the Town Assessor". Roger Blood MOVED and Bill Madsen Hardy SECONDED

VOTED: The HAB voted to approve the Scope of Services from Pam McKinney to begin providing consultant services to the HAB concerning the reevaluation of the Town's Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw.

ALL APPROVED

5. Update and Discussion on Metro Mayors Coalition Housing Production Task Force – Phase 2

Virginia remarked that she and Jennifer Raitt attend the Metro Mayors Coalition Housing Production Task Force meetings, which is moving into Phase 2. Phase 2 includes a more in-depth analysis on the different types of housing needed in the region and also the creation of statewide strategies and policies which could be utilized by municipalities to reach a regional goal of 185,000 new units by 2030. Virginia noted that she and Roger will be following up with Select Board Chair and the Town Administrator on this topic.

Virginia asked the HAB if they had an opinion on whether the Town should have a numerical goal for new housing units to be created by 2030.

Jennifer stated that while reaching a local number will not be easy, there should be consistent education provided to the community and the Select Board should take a strong position on this subject.

Steve recommends that the Town establish a goal, but there should be more focus on the process to reach it. Bill added that a goal is easy to understand and would provide the opportunity to update residents and leaders of the Town each year on how it is reaching this goal.

Mike continued the conversation by mentioning that the goal is not as important as the process, as the process provides the public with education.

Jennifer noted that the idea is to set a goal by working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and this would include a process of reviewing types of housing needed in each community.

Roger added that the Town should work with MAPC but asked if they would have a process to identify what they'd like to see each community achieve.

Virginia commented that the taskforce is not forcing any goals on individual communities, but would recommend a number to help guide policy toward the production of housing. She added that more research to obtain a number would be needed, particularly concerning residential growth opportunities in underutilized land areas.

Roger then said that the Town should proactively set an overall housing goal but also identify how many of those new units should be affordable and also identify the criteria that is applied by/for each community in determining their local goals.

Jennifer recommends that the next step should be to update the Select Board on the taskforce's work.

Bill added that he is on the Boston Mayor's Taskforce which involves a large number of people and stated that the HAB could lead a similar process in Brookline.

6. Brookline Housing Authority Strategic Preservation Initiative – Proposed policy to waive building permit fees for future BHA projects.

(Michael Jacobs, BHA-designated HAB member, recused himself from the discussion)

Roger stated that at the last HAB meeting, there was discussion regarding a policy to allow for the waiver of building permit fees for Brookline Housing Authority projects and passed out a draft policy to members.

Roger added that the Town Building Commissioner was opposed to this policy as he stated that the building permit fees help cover the Town's costs associated with the building process.

Steve noted that building permit fees go directly into the Town's general fund and are not department-specific.

Patrick Dober, Executive Director of the Brookline Housing Authority (BHA) stated that he approves of the draft policy and also that the Select Board had enthusiastically approved waiving the building permit fees for the 61 Park Street and Dummer Street projects in the past. The federal RAD conversion program allows the BHA to sustain momentum on the modernization of federal properties, but the absence of programs tailored to state-funded properties and the limited supply of financing options, makes renovation of state-funded properties difficult at this time. Waiving the fees for future projects would be easier for planning purposes and would result in substantial cost-savings which BHA properties could benefit from.

Steve Heikin MOVED and Jennifer Raitt SECONDED

VOTED: The Brookline Housing Authority, as the single largest provider of affordable housing in the Town of Brookline, fulfills a unique and essential role in creating, managing and preserving low-income affordable rental housing in Brookline.

The Housing Advisory Board recommends that the Select Board and Town Building Department adopt a policy, in support of local affordable housing, to waive applicable building permit fees chargeable to the Brookline Housing Authority (BHA). This fee waiver policy shall apply to properties wholly-owned by BHA or controlled by a BHA subsidiary for new low-income rental project developments and substantial rehabilitation projects, such as those being undertaken on six BHA-owned existing properties.

Building permit fee waivers would not apply to ongoing property maintenance and incremental property improvements undertaken by the BHA.

This fee waiver policy is not intended to be incorporated into any Town bylaw or regulation.

ALL APPROVED (Michael Jacobs abstained from the vote)

UPDATES

1. Waldo/Durgin Warrant Articles – update from Town Meeting

Roger noted that Town Meeting voted 204 to 5 to approve a new zoning overlay district with the affordable housing payout for the Waldo-Durgin site allowing Chestnut Hill Realty to move forward with a mixed-use apartment and hotel development at the site. He added that Rebecca Mautner, a Town Meeting member, spoke in opposition to the affordable housing component of the proposal at Town Meeting and had sent Town Meeting Members an email outlining her concerns. Roger drafted a short response to Town meeting members and will invite her to the next HAB meeting for discussion.

Roger provided the HAB with the draft response for their comments. Jennifer observed that one point which is missing in the letter is the HAB's role in the pre-development process and that there was a healthy public dialogue to get to where the project is today.

Steve agreed with Jennifer's statement and recommends this be explained at the beginning of the second paragraph. He added that the project was discussed and the affordable housing component was supported by multiple boards in addition to the HAB

Virginia remarked that the Fair Housing Committee had scheduled her on their next agenda. Roger added that it is important that the Fair Housing Committee know that the HAB is the entity responsible for setting the Town's policies on affordable housing and will be holding public meetings on this topic in the future.

Virginia stated that Rebecca is advocating for more onsite units and less or no cash in regard to the bylaw.

Mike added that the priority is to have units in larger, new developments, but the HAB should identify under what circumstances it might be more appropriate to allow or require a cash payment to meet the obligation.

Roger made the proposed changes to the draft response and will send it to Town Meeting members.

2. Affordable Senior Housing Project at 370 Harvard Street (2Life)

Virginia mentioned that the closing was scheduled to happen any day, but there have been some details to follow up for the permanent lender as well as some elements to be finalized with the Building Department. There are also agreements concerning the new easement with the neighboring condo association and this will require signatures from the condo owners and information on the lenders of their mortgages. They are moving toward closing in escrow in the next few days and the building is currently being cleaned out and asbestos removal is being performed by crews in preparation for demolition. The closing on the funding should occur in the next few weeks.

3. Newbury College site acquisition – update

Steve Heikin said that the Town was not the successful bidder for the property and that the Town will continue to monitor the situation.

4. Kent-Station Street Senior Housing Study Committee – RFP to be released soon

Roger stated that the Select Board has approved the RFP for the project and that Heather Hamilton, Chair of the Kent Street Affordable Housing Committee confirmed that the RFP would be issued before July 4th.

5. Status of current 40B and Inclusionary Zoning Projects

Virginia discussed with the HAB a list of 40B projects in the Town. She added that the Town is assisting with the marketing and is accepting applications for 455 Harvard Street's four affordable units. David Guzman noted that 510 applications have been received so far with 324 of them being eligible.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:34pm