

HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
October 1, 2019
Brookline Town Hall – Room 111
(As approved at HAB meeting of October 15, 2019)

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

Staff: Virginia Bullock, Edward Bates, Joe Viola, David Guzman, Zoe Lynn

Guests: Jesse Gray, Patrick Dober, Beverly Craig, Bob Fitzpatrick

Members of the Public: Alan Leviton, Kathleen Scanlon, Joan Lancourt, Robert Lepson, Daria Mark, Werner Lohe, Maria Maffei, Diane Sokal, Bob Fitzpatrick, Lisa Cunningham, Cora Weissband

Roger Blood called the meeting to order at 7:33PM

1. Approval of minutes from July 23, 2019 HAB meeting

HAB members **VOTED** unanimously to approve the minutes from the July 23, 2019 meeting. Jennifer Raitt abstained from the vote as she did not attend the meeting.

2. Update on CHAPA Municipal Engagement Initiative (MEI) grant

Roger Blood stated that the HAB had submitted an application for CHAPA's Municipal Engagement Initiative grant but Brookline was not awarded the grant.

Jonathan Klein said that he had a debriefing with Dana LeWinter from CHAPA on the grant. He said that CHAPA was complimentary of Brookline's application, but ultimately chose to assist Lynn, Revere, and Foxboro since they felt these municipalities could use more support. Jonathan further explained that CHAPA would like to provide assistance for Brookline's affordable housing outreach initiative, but this will more likely be in more of a consulting and less proactive role. CHAPA would like to talk with representatives from the Town mid-October about how to move this relationship forward.

Roger continued to discuss that the HAB would like to plan for at least one broad outreach event to educate the public on affordable housing and gain feedback from them. Roger asked Jonathan to lead this initiative, which he accepted. Jennifer Raitt will also assist with the initiative and others are welcome, as well.

Joan Lancourt, a member of the Commission for Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations noted that they had discovered the CHAPA MEI grant at the same time as the HAB. She explained that she'd like to form a collaboration to have an affordable housing forum in Brookline that is not just one event since the initiative is too complicated.

Jonathan will work with Ms. Lancourt and others for the October call with CHAPA. Ms. Lancourt mentioned that the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance is also interested in providing support for the initiative.

3. Kent-Station Street Senior Housing RFP – update and next steps

Roger stated that the Town has received three competitive proposals from credible developers for the proposed Kent-Station Street Senior Housing Project. An Evaluation Committee has been appointed and Joe Viola from the Planning Department will staff it.

Joe further noted that the Evaluation Committee has eight members, including three HAB members, and will meet the next week to begin reviewing proposals with a goal to have a letter of intent from a chosen developer by February and bring the proposed project before Spring Town Meeting for a vote.

4. Potential for Private Institutions as Affordable Housing Financial Partners

Roger observed that Select Board Member, Ben Franco, sent an article to him about Harvard University investing \$20 Million in affordable housing in Greater Boston. Select Board Member Franco would like to HAB to explore additional private institutions that may show interest in investing in affordable housing in the Town.

The HAB continued discussion on this topic and Jonathan and Jennifer will reach out to Karen Kelleher from LISC to provide some insight on the Harvard partnership. Roger further stated that this topic will be discussed at the November HAB meeting.

5. Public Hearing on Warrant Article 19: Amend the Town's Zoning- By-Law to allow Accessory Dwelling Units

Roger gave a presentation to the HAB about the proposed Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Warrant Article which will be before Fall Town Meeting for a vote. Roger explained that all seven HAB members have signed on to this warrant article as petitioners and that there is broad support from citizens in Brookline.

After the presentation, Roger asked HAB members if they had any questions or comments on the proposal. Jennifer asked Roger if ADUs would be everywhere a single family residence is. Roger explained that ADUs would be available to any single family residence as the proposal is property-driven, not zoning-driven.

Steve Heiken asked Roger if ADUs would be allowed in detached garages. Roger stated that this would be allowed by a special permit and that the garage space must have been constructed five years prior to the date of application to build an accessory dwelling unit. **The** parking at the residence must continue to comply with zoning requirements for a single family home. Roger further noted that additions to the residence for accessory dwelling units are also only allowed by special permit.

Jennifer observed that there may be an issue with the by-law's policy of exterior appearance requiring that a residence with an ADU not show evidence in the front facade of two units. For example, this may be a problem concerning front doors since abiding by this rule may not be easy to achieve in all residences. Roger explained that the by-law had been modified to allow a second entrance to be seen from the street, but it cannot be in the front of the residence. Most single family owners prefer this policy.

Bob Lepson, a Precinct 9 Town Meeting Member and a member of the Commission for Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations, stated that the by-law has been discussed at the Fair Housing

subcommittee meetings and he thinks that this is a good idea and approves of it. A public hearing will be scheduled at a future subcommittee meeting on this topic. Joan Lancourt observed that she agrees with Mr. Lepson's approval of the by-law.

Mr. Lepson also asked Roger if the by-law could be extended to larger two-family buildings. Roger explained that adding two-family building to the by-law may make it more complicated. Roger further stated that if the current warrant article passes town meeting with a wide margin of support, exploring the expansion of the by-law to two-family buildings may be a possibility in the future.

Jennifer Raitt MOVED and Jonathan Klein SECONDED

VOTED: HAB approval of Warrant Article 19 which amends the Town's Zoning- By-Law to allow Accessory Dwelling Units.

ALL APPROVED

6. UPDATE – Hebrew Senior Life Master Plan for 108 Centre Street Redevelopment

Virginia explained that Hebrew Senior Life is planning for a project at 108 Center Street which will include additional senior affordable housing, assisted living, and expanded community space. They are currently distributing a community questionnaire which will be sent to 7,500 residents to determine additional senior service needs in the community. For this project, they are also exploring a partnership with the Brookline Senior Center. Virginia will provide the HAB with any updates on this project.

7. UPDATE – New Continuum of Care Project at Newbury College – Inclusionary Zoning Requirements

Roger stated that Welltower, a national senior care facility developer, has completed the purchase of the Newbury College site. Welltower is still exploring a plan for the property, but they have a goal of presenting a proposal to Town Meeting Members at Spring Town meeting that will include high end independent rental units, assisted living units, and memory care units for seniors. The project will be subject to the Town's Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) by-law, although the Building Commissioner has yet to rule on whether the memory care units are subject to IZ regulations. The developer has expressed a preference for a cash buy-out. Roger further noted that he may invite the development team to meet with the HAB in November to discuss the project and will touch base with the Select Board appointed committee who is negotiating with the developer.

8. Public Hearing on Warrant Article 21: Adoption of a new General By-law prohibiting new fossil fuel infrastructure in major construction

Jesse Gray, a co-Petitioner for Warrant Article 21, gave a presentation describing the details of Warrant Article 21 and the process that the petitioners undertook to develop the proposed by-law. He explained that the by-law is necessary for the Town reach its goal of zero emissions by 2050. It would be activated through the issuance of a building permit if the project is categorized as a level three (substantial) renovation or new construction. If triggered, the project would not have the ability to install new fossil fuel piping, but existing fossil fuel piping could be maintained in various cases. If approved by Town Meeting, the by-law would be effective on June 1, 2020.

Mr. Gray further explained that the petitioners have hosted three community feedback sessions on the warrant article and it has been discussed by the Economic Development Advisory Board and the Preservation Commission. The Warrant Article includes potential waivers for affordable housing and BHA projects, upon a HAB recommendation.

Robert Fitzpatrick, Director of Government Affairs at the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center spoke to explain that the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center is not taking a position on this particular warrant article. He then introduced Beverly Craig, Senior Project Manager, Low and Moderate Income Programs at the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center who then provided some explanations on technical aspects of the warrant article.

Ms. Craig specifically spoke about heat pumps and explained that for many multi-family developments, both public and private developers are installing heat pumps for heat as the price for them is going down and they are becoming better able to work in colder climates. Also, with more efficient building envelopes, operation costs are comparable to other types of systems. She also commented that with rising temperatures globally, heat pumps will eventually be the less expensive option as they can both cool and heat with one system.

Ms. Craig further explained that central electric water heaters for larger developments are only currently available in Europe and Japan. Bill Madsen Hardy asked if separate hot water heaters are available. Ms. Craig observed that they are, but when for example, the development is over ten units, a developer would most likely want to have a central water heating system.

Mr. Gray discussed that as of July, 2019, there are a total of eight municipalities in the United States that have enacted similar regulations to this warrant article.

Virginia stated that affordable housing development is currently leading the way on sustainable construction and operations but there are still concerns over higher costs of green buildings. She further explained that many of these costs can be mitigated through a tighter building envelope and working with groups like New Ecology that can do the energy and financially modeling needed to inform affordable housing projects. DHCD will be adopting stricter efficiency standards as part of its Qualified Action Plan next year and details are expected to be released later this year.

Roger noted that there were originally two waivers drafted for the HAB's vote in response to the proposed by-law. One would allow affordable housing developments with over 50% affordable units a waiver subject to the HAB review and support. The other would allow the Brookline Housing Authority to have a blanket waiver.

Patrick Dober, Executive Director of the Brookline Housing Authority (BHA), said that the BHA has cost constraints for construction since they rely heavily on tax credits and other public subsidies for their projects but are unable to attract private grants for their renovation and construction work, as they are a public entity. He explained that for years, the BHA has been installing energy-efficient elements and that this is also the mission for future projects. He stated that the BHA will work with the warrant article's petitioners to create an appropriate waiver provision. Mr. Gray has agreed to work with the BHA.

The HAB is generally favorable to the warrant article but will take a vote on it at the next HAB meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45PM