

Concord Housing Roundtable – Joint Meeting

CONCORD HOUSING AUTHORITY
CONCORD HOUSING FOUNDATION
CONCORD HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUNDING COMMITTEE
September 26, 2018
MINUTES

Roll Call:

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the Chair of each Housing Group in attendance. Lee Smith of the Concord Housing Development Corporation, Richard Eifler of the CHA, and Todd Benjamin of the Affordable Housing Funding Committee, Charles Philipps of the Concord Housing Foundation.

CHA:

MEMBERS PRESENT

Richard Eifler
Todd Benjamin
Fatima Mezdad

MEMBERS ABSENT

Hester Schnipper
Edward Larner

CHDC:

MEMBERS PRESENT

Lee Smith
Jerry Evans
Jim Burns
Doug Bacon

MEMBERS ABSENT

Nicole Palmer
Yannis Tsitsas
Barbara Morse

AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUNDING COMMITTEE:

MEMBERS PRESENT

Todd Benjamin
Holly Darzen
Ray Andrews
Sue Myers
Vince Carlson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Concord Housing Foundation:

MEMBERS PRESENT

Charles Phillipps
Holly Darzen
Terry Rothermel
Rich Feely
Nancy McJennett
Steven Carr

MEMBERS ABSENT

[unknown]

Other staff and elected persons present, as self-identified

Marianne Nelson – CHA Staff

Elizabeth Rust – RHSO Staff

Linda Escobedo – Select Board

Marcia Rasmussen – Town Staff

Mary Hartman - Fin Com

Facilitator Elizabeth Rust from Regional Housing Services opened the discussion by welcoming all of the housing groups to discuss the several different potential affordable housing opportunities currently before the Town.

Black Birch: All housing groups were asked to state their position on Warrant Article 12; whether to accept payment of \$1 million in lieu of two units at the Black Birch (BB) Development. The BB development is a 55+ development located off of Forest Ridge Rd. that is currently under construction. The original intent was for the developer to develop two of these units with affordable deed restrictions. Because this is an age restricted development that prohibits children, DHCD will not allow these units to be added to the Town's Subsidized Housing Index (SHI) therefore the developer has offered the Town \$1 million for Payment in Lieu of Units. At this time, Jerry Evans recused himself from this discussion.

Liz Rust presented several different options, subject to review by Town Counsel and Select Board approval on how funds could be held should they become available. Mary Hartman, 16 Concord Green, Finance Committee, asked about community input and the approval process for making decisions on Affordable Housing spending if this money is accepted. This process will be discussed further at Town meeting.

Lee Smith spoke on the position of the CHDC. The CHDC supports this warrant article because they feel that by having funds readily available, they could take advantage of affordable housing opportunities that arise either by the purchase or buy down of modestly priced existing homes or the funds could act as seed money to leverage other funding sources for large projects. This money could also be used for the preservation of existing units where original deed restrictions, when created, did not include language that protected them in perpetuity. The CHDC also maintains a small grant funding program where Concord home owners of low and moderate income can receive financial assistance to make health and safety repairs to their properties. The creation of an affordable housing fund with this money could provide the CHDC with the flexibility it needs to be take advantage of opportunities when they arise.

Terry Rothermel, 330 Musketaquid Rd, asked whether the Town approached the developer or if the developer approached the Town regarding payment in Lieu of Units. It was explained that in February 2018 there had been a change in DHCD's stand on the prohibition of children in units that can be added to the SHI. A formal appeal was prepared and submitted to the State to add the units but it was denied. It was at that time, the developer made the offer of Payment in Lieu of Units to the Town.

Rick Eifler spoke on behalf of the CHA. The CHA Board was not able to reach a consensus on the position. The CHA could benefit from the \$1 million payment by creating more affordable housing on existing land and properties already owned and managed by the CHA or by the few different land acquisition scenarios that are presently before the Town.

Charles Phillips spoke on behalf of the CHF. The CHF is not in favor of Warrant Article 12. Although the units can not be added to the SHI, it is the position of the CHF that the two affordable units are needed by the Town and the addition would be immediate. The group also questioned whether the compensation was considered a fair price in exchange for the units.

Todd Benjamin spoke on behalf of the Affordable Housing Funding Committee who is also not in favor of Article 12. The AHFC feels that adding two affordable units to the Town has a higher value and fulfills an immediate need.

It was mentioned that accepting the units as luxury age restricted units versus the opportunity to develop family units if money was accepted should be considered.

Rich Feely, CHF, asked whether accepting Payment in Lieu of Units would be setting a precedent for developers. Marcia responded by explaining this was not likely. This was an unusual scenario as this land was an Alternative Planned Restricted Development and was not originally zoned for residential use.

Gerow: The next item for discussion was the Gerow Land and house located off of Commonwealth Ave. The Town exercised the option to purchase land known as the Gerow property from the Gerow family for an amount lesser than market value with the restriction that the town agrees to use the land as recreational space by creating a park and to restrict the one unit of housing on the property for affordable housing. A site visit to the property to look at the condition of the house initiated debate on the cost to renovate the home and move it to a location adjacent to an existing CHA property vs. building a new unit. Rick Eifler offered his professional opinion as an architect summarizing that unknown costs associated with renovating and moving an older house may be a less sensible option than to build a newer energy efficient unit on a portion of Gerow land closest to the CHA property if the driveway can be moved. Due to the proximity to the existing CHA unit, it would make sense for the CHA to manage this unit.

Terry Rothermel expressed some disappointment over tearing down an existing established home versus rebuilding a new one. Charles Phillips is in favor of preserving and moving the existing home.

Holly Darzan, AFHC asked what method was used to calculate the cost vs. benefit of renovating vs. new construction. Liz added that an initial assessment of the property by Ryan Orr, Director of Facilities in the Town used a guideline of 10 years of useful life as an indicator when determining cost vs. replacement. The home will require lead paint remediation, a new roof, windows, heating system, insulation and windows as well as other updates in addition to the costs associated with moving the home totaling approximately \$350,000.

Todd Benjamin asked about the cost of dredging the pond for aquatic activity. Although Town residents hope to be able to use the pond for swimming, the initial use will be for boating, ice skating, paddle boarding, etc. and the Town will take a phased approach regarding renovation. A CPC application for funds has been submitted to begin this process.

Many in attendance agree that although the focus of the land is for recreational use, there is concern that the affordable housing piece may end up on the back burner.

Other Items: Marcia briefed the groups on the Emerson House Land Trust. The Trustees have approached the Town to see if there is interest in purchasing a 2.4-acre parcel of land informally known as the “pumpkin field” for the purposes of creating affordable housing or allowing greater access to the CHA land. The parcel sits behind the CHA Walden St. development.

Lee Smith spoke on APP54 that requires the Select Board to notify Housing Groups of available land for affordable housing purposes and potential opportunities. There will be recommendations for revising this policy.

Habitat for Humanity has approached the Town to see if there is interest in a potential affordable housing project.

CPC has received 14 applications requests totaling \$2.5 million with \$1.4 million available.

LWV will hold a housing focus on Friday, November 2 at 9:00 a.m. in the Fowler Library

The Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies will present a live- stream seminar on twitter on Friday, September 28 on how public housing authorities are partnering with the private sector to develop affordable housing.

An Information on Senior co-housing is scheduled in Acton. Details are posted in the Fowler Library.

Terry Rothermel asked if there had been any further discussion on by- law zoning changes to allow the addition of accessory units. This topic remains part of the comprehensive plan.

Upon motion made by Lee Smith of CHDC, Fatima Mezdad, CHA, Todd Benjamin, AHFC and seconded by Jerry Evans, CHDC, Todd Benjamin CHA, and Ray Andrews AHFC it was **VOTED:** to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Marianne Nelson, September 26, 2018