



Burlington Housing Partnership Committee

Meeting Minutes

April 29, 2021 via Cisco Webex

Committee Members Present: Mike Runyan, Chair
Ernie Covino, Vice Chair
Kerry Donahue, Secretary
Rita Shah
Henry Wu
Bob Young

Committee Members Not Present: Charles Viveiros

Other Attendees: Whitney Haskell (Town of Burlington), Shelly Goehring (Massachusetts Housing Partnership), Eileen Sickler, Kristin Kassner, Michele Smith, Edward Parsons

- Mike Runyan called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm

Municipal Housing Trust

- Mike Runyan introduced Shelly Goehring, Massachusetts Housing Partnership
- Shelly presented her slides on forming a Municipal Housing Trust
- Shelly's slides cut off; she will share the rest of her slides by email tomorrow
- Shelly's presentation stressed that it is largely up to each community how they want to implement the Trust, the guidelines they want to put in place around how many Trustees there should be (7 is most common), who those Trustees should be (reps from other boards, real estate/housing experts, town staff such as the Town Administrator, etc.), what powers the Trustees have, how the Trust will receive funding (e.g. Community Preservation Act funds, town fees, lease payments, tax title sales, tax overrides, donations, developer negotiated fees), etc. Some towns also dissolve existing boards like HPC, roll them into the Trustees, or modify their mission (Trust manages affordable housing, Partnership handles advocacy, other programs, etc.). Varies by community.
- Ernie Covino asks if Burlington becomes CPA community do funds automatically go to affordable housing? Shelly says funds would have to be allocated to the Trust but varies by community (typically goes through Town Meeting, towns often allocate a certain percentage of funds to the Trust).
- Bob Young asked if the Trustees could potentially abuse their powers if they don't have to go through Town Meeting to spend funds; Shelley indicated she's never seen this happen, some

towns put a dollar threshold above which the Trust needs Town Meeting approval to spend funds.

- Rita Shah asked if funds can be used to assist elders who can't upkeep properties. Shelley says no, Trust funds are typically for deed-restricted affordable housing. Many communities have rehab programs through community development programs.
- Shelly indicated that the most effective Trusts have a paid staff person (typically part-time) who handles administrative side of the Trust (scheduling meetings, taking Minutes, handling communications); salary can be paid using funds in the Trust.
- Shelly stressed that it can be tempting to "take the path of least resistance" and spend funds on programs for homeowners which is why it's critical to do a housing needs analysis; renters are often the most in need of assistance.
- Kristin Kassner asked for information about how MassHousing can help with process; Shelly does this and can do this with/for us (she does talks, trainings with new Trustees, etc.)
- Mike Runyan thanked Shelly and said we'll send additional questions to her; committee members can email any additional questions to Mike.
- Committee agrees that we need to do a needs assessment for the town, Mike Runyan believes MAPC (Metropolitan Area Planning Council) can be hired to do this. Might need Town Meeting approval to spend the funds.
- Ernie Covino will discuss with Kristin Kassner how we might reach out to MAPC to do a needs assessment (what it will cost, how long it will take, etc.).
- We might be able to seek Town Meeting approval for both the needs assessment and forming the Trust at the September 2021 meeting.

Update from Planning Board discussion of Accessible Dwelling Units & Housing Choice Legislation

- Ernie Covino gave update; Burlington allows in-law apartments, many get turned into illegal rentals, need to understand how they are and where they are.
- Kristin Kassner says we're seeing a lot of illegal conversions because there's no easy way to convert them.
- Housing Choice – Lisa Mead gave an update, it gives us a state definition for accessory dwelling units which is helpful. Her presentation is on the Planning Department website.

Update on Winn View Heights II

- Kerry Donahue asked for an update on this development – how it came about, where it stands, what's happening with it now.
- Ernie Covino says HPC took an informal stand on idea a few years ago, but it was a concept only; didn't see a plan for 24 unit building.
- Mike Runyan says the concept was presented by the developer; original plan had a few separate buildings, but has been modified, and it was always age-restricted.
- BOS supported concept, and it was sent to ZBA, which is where it is now.

- Kerry Donahue asked why abutters weren't notified, Mike Runyan indicated that people who purchased the Winn View I condos have it in their deed that there may be additional developments. Kerry indicated this isn't notifying them, and they aren't the only abutters.
- Bob Young asked – did they not need to talk to the planning department, etc.?
- Mike Runyan indicated that 40B plans go through a different process, the Planning Board isn't involved at all. Zoning Board of Appeals will review the plan now.
- Kristin Kassner says board of appeals steps into every other body's shoes on a 40B development.
- With this development, there are 2 easements needed but ZBA has postponed discussion until developer can prove they have access to the site.
- Kristin Kassner says it was difficult for the Planning Department to react to this concept because the first time they saw an actual plan was when it went to ZBA. Kristin will share info for Viewpoint to see docs related to development.
- Mike Runyan suggested perhaps we reach out to Ken Gordon because perhaps the state laws need to be amended to make the steps in these developments more transparent.
- Bob Young asked if town counsel is involved; Kristin Kassner says yes, our lawyer is waiting for the developer's legal argument for the easements.
- Kerry Donahue indicated that part of the problem right now is that no one has been able to locate Minutes from the HPC meeting where this concept was approved. Looking ahead, the housing page of the town website needs to be updated with information about any developments, their progress, etc. so there is total transparency.
- Ed Parsons shared link to [Massachusetts 40B Handbook for the Zoning Boards of Appeals Handbook](#)

Habitat for Humanity inquiry

- Ernie received an inquiry from Habitat for Humanity in Lowell; he and Henry recall someone from the org presenting to HPC in the past
- Committee agrees we don't have a piece of property Habitat could use (they tend to do more new construction than rehabs) but it's a good organization to stay in touch with.
- Kerry Donahue notes that the Habitat model works very well when the town doesn't have the resources/bandwidth to manage construction of an entirely new property for affordable housing.

Recruitment of new Committee members

- BOS will make appointments to HPC in June; Kerry Donahue will add link to Town Committee application on the HPC website.
- Existing HPC members should let Mike know if they want to continue as members.

New/Old Business

- Kerry Donahue shared draft document with Committee members earlier this week of draft content for the Housing Information page of town website, asks everyone to review and add suggestions/content. Will be sent to Amy Warfield in a week or so.
- Kerry Donahue made motion to approve the March 2021 Minutes, seconded by Ernie Covino, approved unanimously.
- Mike Runyan adjourned meeting at 7:58 pm.