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Burlington Housing Partnership Committee Meeting Minutes

July 22, 2021 via Cisco Webex

Committee Members Present: Mike Runyan, Chair
Ernie Covino, Vice Chair
Kerry Donahue, Secretary
Rita Shah
Eileen Sickler
John Sullivan
Henry Wu

Other Attendees: Shari Ellis, Kristin Kassner, Myrna Saltman

- Mike Runyan called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm
- Mike Runyan welcomed new committee member Eileen Sickler, thanked Bob Young for his years of service. Mike noted that Shari Ellis applied for the opening as well and is certain there is a position for her on this or the Affordable Housing Trust committee.

Housing Needs Assessment & Municipal Housing Trust

- Kerry Donahue reported that Liz Bonventre was reaching out to MAPC to get a proposal, don't know if she has; Kristin Kassner noted that Liz is out this week, Kerry will reach out to Karina at MAPC to get the proposal going.
- Mike Runyan noted that there has been some discussion of a proposed multifamily development along Cambridge Street under 40R; they're looking at 80% AMI threshold, area is dense, there may not be much support, we may be asked to review it in the future. Discussed at Economic Development meeting; applicant has revised the plan, less units, less height, talked about scheduling a meeting Aug 10 or 11, and trying to curate a group of people from Planning Board, HPC, etc., to see what the proposal is about. Mike would like to get the Housing Needs Assessment first. Kristin says developer is trying to decide whether or not to buy the property so we should relay this to them.
- Ahead of asking Town Meeting to approve the Housing Needs Assessment, Mike Runyan noted that we'd like to get the support of the Planning Board; they meet on Aug 19, it would be helpful to have a write-up or have someone talk about it. Ernie Covino has kept the board apprised of the housing needs assessment.
- Eileen Sickler asked when was the last time the town had an independent housing needs assessment; never.

- Ernie Covino noted it will be important for the assessment to be conducted very independently; hands off for us. Same people show up at town meetings with a certain agenda/perspective and we aren't getting the full picture of what the town really needs.
- Mike Runyan noted that the Northwest Park development is targeting seniors and trying to convince them of the benefits of renting; they balk at current rental rates.
- Affordable Housing Trust – Mike Runyan asked if we need money to do it, Rita Shah says we don't but she'll confirm with Shelly Goering at Mass Housing Partnership.
- Mike Runyan reached out to Larry Cohen, who is leading the local effort on the Community Preservation Act (which most municipal trusts rely on for revenue); Larry was excited to discuss it, very interested in our idea of moving this forward. Larry has invited us to present at their next meeting to discuss it further.
- Shari Ellis noted that there is a planned CPA warrant article for Town Meeting in May 2022 town to then be on the election ballot in Fall 2022. Their next meeting is August 16 at Wegmans. Shari agrees we need to present this to as many committees and boards as possible to gain support.
- Kerry Donahue asked if who is going to present to which committees; unclear right now but Kerry will work on a PowerPoint presentation and get clarity about who is presenting it where:
 - Ways & Means: Mike will get the date
 - Planning: Aug 19, Mike or Ernie?
 - ZBRC: Aug 11, Ernie?
 - Land use: Who?
 - Share presentation with BCAT for a story?
- Mike Runyan noted that, for the Trust, it will be crucial that the board of directors to be the right mix of people: there has to be someone senior from the town, someone with finance experience (David Tate?), that the committee will be apolitical, dedicated to achieving goals.
- Eileen Sickler noted that we need to provide context and explain what the different housing entities in town are (Burlington Housing Authority, Housing Partnership, etc.), explain what they do, talk about new members on committees, etc. Mike Runyan noted that the Burlington Housing Authority is an anomaly, hasn't created any new housing units in 50 years, etc.
- Ernie Covino asked about prevailing wage concerns; Mike Runyan noticed this in the Trust paperwork, Mike says it's not a dealbreaker but abiding by these things makes rehab far more difficult.

117 S. Bedford

- Mike Runyan shared photos of the property, how it looked, the work that has been done, all the town vendors who have done work for no charge.
- We're into the property for \$250K, could offer for \$360 but hoping we can offer for around \$290 so it can go to a family at the 60-70% AMI range rather than 80% AMI range. Just need to recouperate costs for renovations and consultant to run the lottery.

Approval of June minutes

- Rita Shah made motion to approve the June meeting minutes, Henry Wu seconded, unanimously approved.
- Mike will reach out to Whitney to get the date for Ways & Means, etc.
- Hold off scheduling August meeting until we have clarity around these other meetings.
- Mike would like to have a meeting in person – maybe in September?