

**Winchester Housing Partnership Board
Minutes for the Meeting of March 16, 2022**

Present: Chair John Suhrbier, Allan Rodgers, Michael Bettencourt (Select Board), Michelle Bergstrom (School Committee), Cathy Camp Boyle (Housing Authority), Naomi DeLairre, Diab Jerius (Planning Board), Jifeng Liu, David Miller (Conservation Commission), and Felicity Tuttle as Clerk Pro Tem.

Absent: Lisa Matrundola (Disabilities Access Commission), Marty Jones and Ted Martin (Council on Aging)

NEXT MEETING DATE:

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2022, 7:30 PM

(1) February Minutes:

The minutes for the meeting of February 9, 2022 were approved unanimously (without Mr. Bettencourt who arrived late due to another scheduled meeting).

(2) 10 Converse Place:

The Planning Board, after following a careful systematic evaluation approach, approved as part of their March 15, 2022 meeting the 10 Converse Place developers' application for a special permit. They went through each of the criteria for a special permit one by one and then the same process with the criteria for the site plan review. The conversations which took place were very disciplined and focused on each topic at hand. Diab Jerius, Planning Board Chair, noted that this was a process that the Planning Board's previous Chair Heather Von Mering used in the review of the 654 Main Street proposals and that this had worked well. The development's request for a Special Permit by a vote of 4-1, with many special conditions. These include that the affordable units (four of which are for people with incomes under the Boston Area 80% Median Income and two are for the higher 80 to 120% income range) must be accepted by the Department of Housing and Community Development [DHCD].

The comments from Planning Board members included many favorable references to the input provided by the Housing Partnership Board as a part of this review process. The interpretation of the fairly undefined language in the Planned Unit Development [PUD] regarding providing increased housing diversity was particularly helpful.

With regard to the affordable housing units, a suggestion was made during the Planning Board discussion whether the 120% Area Median Income [AMI] units could instead become 80% AMI units and whether two of the 80% AMI units could be changed to 60% AMI units. Town Counsel, however, rejected that suggestion. Further, such a change would likely have a negative financial impact for the developer.

Following the approval vote for a Special Permit, the Planning Board also endorsed the proposed site plan.

3) Waterfield Public Information Meeting:

The Select Board on February 16, 2022 held a public information meeting for the revised proposal for development of the Waterfield Lot. While the CIVICO proposal had been selected by the Select Board and after two favorable Town Meeting votes, a Citizens' Petition put the issue to a town-wide Referendum where the proposed agreement failed by a small number of votes. The Select Board then created a six-

person Waterfield Task Force which met during the summer of 2021, deliberated and offered its recommendations to the Select Board in fall of 2021.

The purpose of the February public information meeting was to present the results of the additional negotiations with CIVICO that were undertaken to respond to the Task Force recommendations. In addition to providing opportunity for public input, two members each from the Finance Committee, the Planning Board, and the Housing Partnership Board [John Suhrbier and Marty Jones] were invited to participate in the Select Board's discussion.

Two of the recommendations from the Waterfield Task Force meetings were to reduce the loss of the public parking that currently is available on the Waterfield site and to increase the revenue to the Town. As part of the subsequent re-negotiation process, CIVICO has proposed three major changes. First, CIVICO will take on the cost to demolish the current old Chamber of Commerce building, relieving the Town of what might otherwise have been a Town expense if this was not to be renovated as part of CIVICO's plan. Second, the revised design would remove the gateway building along with the associated housing and retail units originally proposed along Waterfield Road and add a 4th floor to the front portion of the residential building to partially make up for this lost space. Third, with the ground space added from the first two changes, CIVICO would repave and maintain 22 additional town parking spaces along the MBTA commuter rail line, thereby providing a total of 70 parking spaces available to the public. The total number of residential units would still be 60 rental units with 40 of the 60 to be affordable for households earning under 60% AMI and 20 to be market rate rentals. This would utilize the maximum number of housing tax credits likely to be available by the state for a single development.

It is significant to point out that the parking in the current lower Waterfield lot costs local employees only \$10 per year for a tag [no space reservations; park if space available] so that the town is providing a significant subsidy for the actual cost of those spaces to make it easier for business owners and their employees to park near their work locations.

Housing Partnership Board members noted that these changes, while increasing the availability of public parking results in less diverse housing choices in the development and the loss of the public plaza, retail space, and the renovation of the Chamber of Commerce building. The positive outcomes are (1) an increase in public parking and (2) more revenue to the Town since all 40 affordable units should now be available for tax credit financing which in turn results in more favorable annual payments to the Town. It was noted that CIVICO has "hung in there" throughout these lengthy negotiations, while many developers might well have dropped the entire project and instead undertaken planning and development in another municipality.

Despite these changes that had been undertaken to respond to requests made by Task Force members Paul Manganaro and Patrick Fortin, these two individuals nonetheless submitted a letter saying that the negotiated changes were not sufficient to satisfy their recommendations.

The Select Board would like to bring an updated Waterfield proposal to either Spring Town Meeting or a Special Town Meeting held shortly thereafter. The immediate next steps are to focus on the updated terms of the ground lease.

4) Washington and Swanton Land:

Michael Bettencourt explained that the public discussion around the January Request for Proposals [RFP] for the Washington and Swanton lot, recently taken by the town by Eminent Domain, went well. We are now waiting for the latest appraisal information - to be based on the actual proposed use for this land.

In approving the Eminent Domain taking, a Town Meeting Amendment required that all housing units built on this land be eligible to be included the town's Subsidized Housing Inventory [SHI], which implies that this be an all rental development. The motivation for this amendment was to maximize the contribution of this development to our Housing Production Plan Safe Harbor calculation. Simultaneously, the desire has been for a developer to pay a price for the land that corresponds to what the Town paid to purchase the land. However, it is anticipated that both of these goals cannot be attained.

If Town Meeting feels that preference should be given to Safe Harbor certification, that will mean that a developer will have less money to pay the Town for the purchase of the land. Alternatively, if Town Meeting prefers that we recover the full cost of the land from a developer, then we will need a different development structure. It is not possible under DHCD regulations to have a combination of condominium and rental housing units with all of the affordable units being part of the rentals since this would be a violation of their "proportional distribution" requirement. Town Meeting members had good intentions in passing the proposed amendment, but there are simply practical limitations to implementation that were not realized

5) 87-89 Cross Street:

Mario Covino owns the long, narrow lot located at 87-89 Cross Street. He is proposing a Friendly Chapter 40B with nine units of rental housing including two affordable units serving households earning no more than 60% of the Boston AMI. This distribution would enable all nine housing units to be included in Winchester's Subsidized Housing Inventory and count towards meeting the town's Safe Harbor goals.

He has approached both the Select Board and the Planning Board. The preliminary plan showing nine 3 story townhouses, each with one interior garage space and one exterior parking spaces. The shape of the lot is somewhat challenging with a short side on Cross Street.

A suggestion was made whether it would be possible for one or two units to have a bedroom located on the first floor so that this floor would be fully accessible for persons having a physical disability.

The land currently contains a historic house that is not now in good shape. However, the demolition delay period has gone by so this existing house now can be removed.

6) 36-40 Elmwood, The Allegro:

The Fair Housing Marketing and Lottery Process for the affordable unit located on the third floor at 36 Elmwood currently is underway. The first information session will be held on Wednesday evening, March 23rd at the Town Hall Auditorium. There will be a second Info session from 11-12 on Saturday, April 2nd, same place, and then from 12-2

pm on the 2nd an Open House. This is a 2 bedroom, 2 bath unit of 1,084 sf and a monthly fee of \$160, with \$10 more per month for garage parking for this unit.

7) Multi-Family Zoning for MBTA Service Areas:

In 2021, the Massachusetts Legislature passed legislation requiring that cities and towns which are served by subways, buses and trains to have multi-family zoning within a half mile of the transportation. After a considerable delay, the Massachusetts DHCD completed and published draft guidelines to elucidate what cities and towns need to do to comply with the Bill. Comments on these draft guideline are due by March 31. In addition, the Select Board needs to conduct a public meeting to discuss these draft guidelines and their implication for the town and to develop a conformance plan by the end of May. Brian Szekely has gone to several workshops on this topic. It is likely that the zoning for the CBD, GBD-1, and GBD-2 districts will need to be amended to be in compliance.

8) CHAPA Municipal Engagement Launch Meeting with the Network for Social Justice, March 23, 2022, 7:00-8:30 PM:

The Network For Social Justice (NFSJ) submitted, with town support, submitted an application to the Municipal Engagement Team of the Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) for support related to the town's affordable housing initiatives. The NFSJ was one of three communities selected by CHAPA for a mini-grant. The meeting to launch this coalition is scheduled for next Wednesday evening, March 23. Housing Partnership Board members are encouraged to attend, and the Chair will send the ZOOM link to join this session. The agenda will include introductory remarks, housing data focusing primarily on Winchester, and breakout rooms with 5-6 possible questions followed by report back to the group.

9) Live-Work Spaces:

Hilda Wong-Doo and Mary McKenna recently met with Town Planner Brian Szekely and John Suhrbier to discuss ways in which it may be possible are to get about 30 live-work artist spaces, with the first step being the conduct of a feasibility study. The location of this artist community could be in the Town Center, in the Holton Street area, or anywhere else in town which might have land to support a multi-unit development of this nature.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Felicity Tuttle

Felicity Tuttle, Clerk pro Tem.