

**Winchester Housing Partnership Board  
Minutes for the Meeting on March 16, 2023**

Present: Chair John Suhrbier, Allan Rodgers, Cathy Boyle (Housing Authority,) David Miller (Conservation Commission), Diab Jerius (Planning Board), Lisa Matrundola (Disabilities Access Commission), Michelle Bergstrom (School Committee), Naomi DeLairre, Philip Bushey (Council on Aging), Stephen Campbell and Felicity Tuttle as Clerk Pro Tem.

Unable to Attend: Marty Jones, Michael Bettencourt

**NEXT MEETING:** Wednesday, April 19, 2023, 7:30

1) **MINUTES of February 15, 2023**

With minor changes and corrections, the minutes for the February meeting were approved with nine votes yes and one abstention because the person had not time to review the draft.

2) **Emerging Housing Opportunities for Winchester Event: John Suhrbier**

From 1:00 to 2:30 PM on Thursday, May 11, in the Cummings Room at the Jenks Center, this board, the Affordable Housing Trust, and the Winchester Housing Coalition will be co-sponsoring a panel discussion describing “Emerging Housing opportunities in Winchester.” Information will be described for five ongoing developments designed to serve young people, young couples, those with families, seniors and those of low and moderate income. An update on the status of the Accessory Dwelling Unit By-Law also will be presented. WINCAM will both broadcast and record the event for future viewing.

We have a large poster which will be exhibited on an easel at the entrance to the Town Voting at the High School on Saturday. We plan to have the same poster available on the easel near the entry for the Spring Town Meeting.

Other publicity includes placing this on the calendar on the Town website and having articles in the Newsletters for the Town Manager, the Jenks Center, Housing Coalition, Network for Social Justice, and League Women Voters. We also will seek to put information in the newsletters for school parents and faith communities, Wright-Locke Farm, the Winchester edition of the Daily Times Chronicle.

A 8.5” x 11” paper poster will be created that can be placed on the bulletin boards of faith communities, various coffee houses and business locations in town, and sent to real estate offices, EnKa and the Woburn Council of Social Concern. One person suggested that if the poster were formatted in landscape view, this could be given to WINCAM to run in their upcoming events scroll. Diab Jerius, Chair of the Planning Board, said they could put it up on the screen while waiting for their meetings to begin.

As part of the meeting, terms such as “moderate and middle income” and “affordable” should be defined. It also would be nice if the developers and their representatives could have sample floor plans and interior illustrations at the

event, as well as information on the likely time line for completion. A chart of Area Median Income by the number of household members would be helpful, and the levels of affordability that each development will serve also would be useful.

A decision has not yet been made on how to provide for questions. Philip Bushey will ask the moderator, Tom Howley, how he would prefer to handle this, whether after each speaker or at the end of all of the presentations.

### **3) Winchester Housing Authority: Cathy Boyle**

Cathy Boyle reported that the Housing Authority has made a request to Winchester's Municipal Affordable Housing Trust for funding for two separate 2-bedroom units at the Parkview for developmentally disabled adults who do not qualify for Group Homes.

### **4) 87-89 Cross Street: John Suhrbier**

Following approval by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development of the Project Eligibility letter, a Comprehensive Permit application has been filed with Winchester's Zoning Board with the resulting public hearing scheduled to start on April 20. The Application from Mario Covino as developer included a list of requested waivers. Since this project is a "Friendly" Chapter 40B, the Chair thought that the list of waivers would have been discussed with the Select Board, the Town Manager and/or the Housing Partnership Board prior to submission. The developer, however, did not do this. The purpose of this evening's discussion, therefore, was to review and discuss this list of requested waivers.

As background, The Chair said that he recently had been told by former Town Planner Brian Szekely that at some point during 2017-2018 Brian, at the direction of the Select Board, had prepared a policy for the handling of Friendly 40B's as a "blueprint" for handling these types of housing developments. The Chair is working on obtaining a copy of this policy. Brian recalled that permit fees and application fees in the Policy were to be waived for affordable units only, and not for the entire development.

Brian suggested that the town also require payment from a developer for the cost of designing and implementing pedestrian safety and traffic circulation improvements. For this Cross Street project as an example, the town may want to install a pedestrian activated crossing light on both sides of Cross Street, which the developer then would pay for. Environmental impact likely would include issues of storm runoff, although David Miller said that this project is outside the applicable buffer zones for the Aberjona River.

The developer, is seeking waiving of "Long Term Monitoring and Costs." However, it was not clear to Board members what specific monitoring and costs he was seeking to be waived.

Under the typical 40B, the developer can be charged for all of the municipality's requested peer review experts. For this project, the developer is asking that these costs instead be paid for by the Town.

While the Board did not hold a formal vote regarding the requested list of waivers, every member who spoke during the discussion was of the opinion that the cumulative number of waivers and the cost of those to the town were too large. No one suggested that the requested waivers were reasonable in either number or extent. It was a consensus of those present that the number of the waivers and costs should be significantly reduced. Using the Friendly 40B Policy adopted by the Town as a foundation, the Chair was asked to prepare a written memorandum for submission to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

**5) Washington-Swanton Development: John Suhrbier**

Melanson Development has applied to Mass. Housing Partnership (MHP) financing regarding the affordable rental units. MHP does have a financing source, not just DHCD. On March 6<sup>th</sup>, Marty Jones; Emma Rogura and Katie Lacey as MHP representatives; Beth Rudolph, Town Manager; John Suhrbier, and several Melanson representatives conducted the site visit. They already knew that there would be contamination around the former gas station and dry cleaner locations. Everything appeared to go well on the site visit: MHP liked the site and that there would be some commercial spaces along the Washington Street first floor and that the development was only about a half mile to the Center and the MBTA commuter rail. Melanson Development is continuing its due diligence process.

After this, MHP needs to make a formal determination on site eligibility and financing – both of which will likely be positive. At that point, Melanson will be able to submit their Comprehensive Permit Application to the ZBA. The Land Development Agreement (LDA) requires that the 80% and 60% affordable units be affordable in perpetuity which was stated in the MHP letter.

**6) Waterfield Lot CIVICO Development: John Suhrbier**

On Monday evening, CIVICO presented to the Select Board a slightly revised plan for the alleyway access just above (north of) the building. There had been abutter concerns that the amount of space for larger trucks to use this access could be too small, so CIVICO presented a plan where the first floor would be moved two feet back and one foot over. The Select Board, with the Engineering Department's concurrence, have signed off on this version. CIVICO is planning to complete their due diligence no later than April 17, after which the Planned Unit Development (PUD) permit request will go to the Planning Board.

**7) MBTA Zoning: Diab Jerius**

The Planning Board will have a meeting in April with the consultants working on the lower part of North Main Street and the town's compliance with the new state requirements for as-of-right multifamily housing near public transportation. The goals defined for Winchester should not be difficult to attain with half of the area located in the Town Center and half in the area

between Skillings and Clark Street. As a result, there should be little or no impact on the upper part of North Main.

**8) Town Planner Search: Diab Jerius**

Seven applicants applied for the open Town Manager position. When the Search Committee met on Wednesday, there was a consensus that one particular candidate was far stringer than the others. That candidate now will move forward. This candidate will be interviewed first by town staff and then by the Planning Board and other members of the Search Committee.

**9) 10-14 Mt. Vernon: John Suhrbier**

Developer John Leavitt has come back for a third time to the Planning Board proposing to add a third floor to the building that he owns at 10-14 Mt. Vernon Street. Lisa Matrundola, Chair of the Disabilities Access Commission (DAC), spoke with Leavitt earlier this month regarding provisions for persons having a disability. He will be installing a new ramp into the building, new railings a handicapped bathroom in one of the residential units, and a handicapped bathroom ion one of the first floor retail locations. In addition, other improvements, as now designed, include a laundry for use by the existing second floor units and an elevator serving all three floors. The combination of all of these will make the building more accessible for those with mobility issues. In a subsequent meeting of the DAC, members were very pleased with the opportunities that would be offered with more one bedroom rental units located in the center of town.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Felicity Tuttle*

Felicity Tuttle, Clerk pro Tem.