

**Winchester Housing Partnership Board
Minutes for the Meeting of May 18, 2023**

Present: John Suhrbier, Chair, I Ching Scott, Steve Campbell, David Miller, Felicity Tuttle, Michael Bettencourt, Naomi DeLairre, Lisa Matrundola, and Allan Rodgers, who prepared these minutes.

Absent: Marty Jones, Philip Bushey, Cathy Boyle, and Michelle Bergstrom.

Guest: Susan Verdicchio

The Board by welcoming I Ching Scott as the new representative of the Planning Board, replacing Diab Jerius. It then reviewed the minutes of the April 19 Board meeting, which had been distributed beforehand by the Chair. Upon motion made and seconded, the Board approved the minutes as presented by a roll call vote of 4-0, with three member abstaining.

The *May 11 forum* on upcoming affordable housing opportunities, held at the Jenks Center was then described and reviewed. Some 50 people attended and others watched on cable TV. The comments, both immediately after the forum and as a part of this meeting, were favorable. There was a high level of interest in the new housing opportunities that were described, including implementation of the new Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) By-Law. Follow up opportunities for additional publicity also were discussed.

The next subject was the update of the Town's *Housing Production Plan (HPP)* which needs to be submitted to the state early in 2024. Michael Bettencourt presented the plans and the timetable for getting this done, including the technical and outreach assistance to be provided by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). Board members identified the issues they thought should be addressed as part of this updated HPP.

Michael Bettencourt next discussed the Select Board's plans for the *20 Glenwood Avenue* land and house, which the Town took for unpaid real estate taxes. Options include issuing an RFP for one or two affordable housing units on the site using a small Chapter 40B application to overcome zoning limitations or just selling the land and using the proceeds to support affordable housing initiatives elsewhere.

The Board next discussed the ongoing Zoning Board of Appeals hearing on the nine rental housing units proposed by Mario Covino for *87-89 Cross Street*. Two hearings have been held so far; the opening hearing on April 20 and then a second hearing on May 10. As a part of the second hearing, the architect, Chris Mulhern, described a suggested design of the portion of the building fronting on Cross Street. ZBA members and others liked this re-design much better than the original design. The next hearing will be on June 1, with a focus on traffic, pedestrian safety, and landscape design.

The next update concerned John Leavitt's proposal to add a third floor to the building he owns at *10-16 Mt. Vernon Street*. This third floor, like the existing second floor, would contain small rental housing units suitable for single persons. While the proposal is consistent with the town's housing objectives, the Planning Board is divided with the opposition based on a desire to maintain the existing two story building without any modification. The next Planning Board meeting, including a formal vote, is scheduled for May 23.

The Chair concluded the meeting by providing brief updates on the following five items:

- The candidate who was offered the *Town Planner* position decided to instead accept an alternative offer. The Planning Board now will re-advertise the position. In the meantime, the Planning Board may look to hire an interim planner.
- The planning Board proposed two Articles for consideration by *Spring Town Meeting*. There was organized opposition to both articles, with the opposition remarks characterized by many as being particularly acrimonious. The result was that neither Article received the votes necessary for adoption.

- The Board next discussed the Town's proposed plan to comply with the state requirement for communities served by the MBTA to provide increased as-of-right zoning for multi-family zoning, being referred to as *Section 3A*. For Winchester, this means within one-half mile of the Winchester Center Commuter Rail Station. The former Town Planner and the Town submitted the state required Action Plan based on use of the Central Business District and a portion of North Main Street. With funding and technical assistance provided by the state, work has continued this Spring. The goal is to present a final plan to the Spring, 2024 Town Meeting.
- The court appeal of the decision in favor of mixed-use housing at *654 Main Street* has been denied, so the developer now is free to proceed with final design and implementation of this development. The development consists of commercial space on the first floor and 36 units of housing, with four of these units affordable for households earning no more than 80% of the Boston Area Median Income (AMI) and two units affordable for households earning no more than 120% of the Boston AMI.
- The appeal of the ZBA permit for *745 Main Street* mixed-use development also was denied, so the developer can proceed to build the approved commercial space and 8 units of housing. The ZBA approval included the condition that the developer provide one unit of affordable housing off-site. The Board needs to discuss with the developer how this requirement will be met.

The Board set June 14 at 7:30 PM for its next meeting and unanimously voted to adjourn.