

Affordable Housing Trust

Meeting Minutes of March 11, 2024 10:00 am

Hybrid meeting on Zoom and attended in-person in Parker room, Town Office Building

Affordable Housing Trust Board Members present: Elaine Tung, Chair; Mark Sandeen, Tiffany Payne, Linda Prosnitz, William Erickson

Staff present: Liz Rust, RHSO Director; Ragi Ramachandran, Administrative Assistant

Other attendees: Lester Savage, Bob Pressman

Ms. Tung chaired the hybrid meeting and called the meeting to order at 10:01 am.

Upon motion duly made and seconded it was voted 5-0 by roll call unanimously to go into Executive session under Exemption 6 to consider the potential purchase of real property. The Affordable Housing Trust reconvened in an open session at the conclusion of the Executive session at 10:48 am.

1. Approve Meeting Minutes

Ms. Tung requested a motion to approve the minutes of 2/7/24, 2/15/24, and 2/22/24 AHT meetings. Mr. Sandeen moved. Ms. Payne seconded. The Trustees voted in favor of the motion 5-0-0, by a roll call vote (Sandeen – yes, Payne – yes, Prosnitz – yes, Tung – yes, Erickson – yes). Meeting minutes approved.

2. Chair, Select Board, Board/Committee Liaison and RHSO/staff report

Ms. Prosnitz shared the update from the Housing Partnership Board that their letter of support for Article 33 will be sent out soon.

Mr. Erickson agreed to coordinate with LexHAB to get the letter of support posted online.

Ms. Payne updated that Melinda Walker will be the liaison from Lexington Housing Authority for the Housing needs assessment. Ms. Rust shared that the first meeting of the Housing Needs Assessment working group is anticipated in early April.

3. Affordable Housing Trust Work Session – Lowell Street and North Street

The Trustees had a detailed discussion on their recommendations to Select Board for the RFP in terms of requirements and preferences for affordable housing development on parcel 68-44, so that the Select Board can review it at their meeting.

The Trustees discussed the affordability requirements, housing development recommendations, building design and capacity, transit and parking, and financial feasibility for the project. They agreed to balance community input, financial feasibility, and tax credit requirements.

The consensus was to have a developer who would work collaboratively with the Town, the development to be for income eligible households with household incomes averaging 60% Area Median Income with a mix of 1, 2 and 3-bedroom apartments. The development should be compatible with the existing architecture of the neighborhood. The selected developer should have experience working with Towns and public agencies, and be willing to engage with the community.

Ms. Rust advised that the minority owned businesses and women owned businesses are 2 specific categories which would make the project score higher for HOME consortium funds.

The Trust discussed RFP preferences for the development to be approximately 40 units of 100% all affordable rental housing, that is well-integrated into the surrounding community, with sustainable design and construction, and maximizing the protection of resource areas and natural features. They preferred multiple smaller buildings rather than one large single structure, with building height of 2.5 stories, compliant with the Town's Integrated Building Design and Construction policy, building types that provides "universally accessible" design, retention of natural features of the site, and being sensitive to neighborhood and adjacent properties, including outdoor common and recreation areas, onsite storage for residents and in-unit laundry facilities, and including areas for outdoor trash and recycling receptacles.

The Trustees decided to request the Select Board to state their intentions for addressing walkability, traffic and transit concerns raised, during community outreach.

Ms. Tung shared the updates to the Article 33 video presentation, she will be re-recording and sharing it with the Deputy Town Manager, Kelly Axtell, to re-post online. The Trustees agreed.

4. New Business

Mr. Erickson shared his response to the question about the berm, to be added to the FAQs. Ms. Tung agreed to consolidate the comments and prepare a final response.

Ms. Payne shared information on an upcoming MHP training on Public Engagement.

Mr. Sandeen updated that the Capital Expenditures Committee has voted in support of Article 33. The Appropriations Committee are not making a recommendation on Article 33 because they don't have enough information to make a direct recommendation on appropriation basis. The Commission on Disability, and Sustainable Lexington did not take a formal vote but have expressed support for Article 33.

5. Confirm future meeting dates

The Trustees agreed to coordinate with Town staff to decide the next meeting date.

6. Adjourn

Mr. Sandeen moved to adjourn, which was seconded by Ms. Payne, and on a roll call vote: (Erickson – yes, Prosnitz – yes, Sandeen – yes, Tung – yes, Payne – yes), the meeting adjourned at 12:41pm.

List of documents reviewed:

Warrant Article 33 Slide presentation