



Lexington Housing Partnership Board

Meeting Minutes for January 21, 2021

Attendees: Harriet Cohen, Jeri Foutter, Mary Haskell, Paul Linton, Robert Peters, Bob Pressman, Mark Sandeen, Melanie Thompson, Melinda Walker, Betsey Weiss

Absent: Rich McDonough, Wendy Manz

Guest: Bob Burbidge, Elizabeth Valenta

The Housing Partnership Board (HPB) meeting was chaired by Jeri Foutter and minutes were taken by Harriet Cohen.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:10.

2. Approve Prior Minutes

The HPB discussed and agreed to several changes in the minutes.

Ms. Walker moved approval of the minutes of December 10. Mr. Peters seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. RHSO Annual Report

Ms. Valenta from RHSO spoke about the annual action plan that is sent to HUD. The plan describes how HOME funds will be spent. Lexington received \$33,000 in HOME funding last year. 10% is allocated for administrative costs, leaving about \$30,000 for use in affordable housing. The Vine Street project is a candidate for the use of those funds. There are also capital projects through the Lexington Housing Authority that might also be candidates for funds, if not for this year, then possibly in future years.

The Select Board has final approval regarding use of the HOME funds.

Mr. Pressman suggested that two Lexington initiatives be include in the report: (1) the Town Meeting-requested approval for a surcharge on the cost of large houses; and (2) the work of the SPRD committee to improve the process to obtain a special permit for housing.

The HPB discussed potential uses for the funds and the pros and cons of using the funds for various projects.

4. Board Member Updates

- Planning Board
Tabled until the next meeting.
- LexHAB
It is anticipated the Wright Farm House will be completed by the end of February. The Lowell Street project should also be complete in that timeframe.
- Lexington Housing Authority
Ms. Walker: No updates.
- Council on Aging
No updates.



Lexington Housing Partnership Board

- **SPRD**

Ms. Weiss provided the most recent documents from the SPRD. There have been no meetings since December.

5. Municipal Affordable Housing Trusts

Mr. Sandeen is seeking alternatives for the management of the moneys in the stabilization funds and an MAHT would be one vehicle for that management.

Ms. Weiss spoke with Elizabeth Rust of RHSO about housing trusts. MAHT funds could be used for a variety of affordable housing needs.

Ms. Foutter noted that, based on prior information, it appears that LexHAB can operate as an MAHT. Mr. Pressman pointed out that LexHAB was created prior to the statute on MAHTs but it functions in many ways like an MAHT.

Town Meeting must approve the creation of an MAHT.

6. AMI Limit for the One Moderate Income Unit in the Emerson Gardens Area Project

Ms. Pressman said that the AMI limit would be 150% and it was anticipated that the unit would sell for about \$500,000. The property was acquired for \$3M and will require another \$1M for the removal of current facilities.

Given those costs, the Town asked the developer to provide an additional unit. The developer replied that they were unable to do so.

7. 116 Vine Street

There will be a community meeting next week regarding the Vine Street project. The meeting has been delayed and is now planned for January 27. Based on the last meeting and after meeting with the Select Board, LexHAB reduced the number of units from seven to six. Mr. Burbidge showed the current sketches for six units. LexHAB's conclusion is that six units is the minimum number of units for a financially viable project.

Mr. Pressman added some information from the LexHAB meeting and the meeting with the Select Board. There was a discussion of a traffic report from 2015 which showed limited cut-through traffic on Vine Street. As the traffic study was from several years ago, there was sentiment that it should be repeated.

Each Select Board member expressed an opinion about the two six-unit alternatives proposed by LexHAB. They unanimously agreed on support for Option A.

Design Review Committee members were present at the Select Board and were supportive of the Vine Street proposal.

Ms. Weiss moved that the HPB support at least six units at 116 Vine Street. Ms. Haskell seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Foutter commended Mr. Burbidge on his conduct of the meetings and his work with the abutters.



Lexington Housing Partnership Board

8. New Business

Mr. Linton had a question regarding the HPB user interface on the Contact page. Mr. Linton is now receiving spam emails several times an hour through the Contact page. He proposed adding a “Captcha” to the page. The HPB agreed with his suggestion.

Ms. Foutter recognized Ms. Walker’s efforts in publicizing the rental assistance fund.

Ms. Walker read a statement commending the enactment of the Housing Choice Bill. On Friday, March 5, the LWV will have a First Friday forum regarding the Housing Choice Bill, with a focus on the parts of the bill that affect Lexington.

9. Action Items

No action items were identified.

10. Set Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be on Thursday, February 25.

11. Adjournment

Ms. Weiss moved adjournment, Ms. Cohen seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:04 pm.