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## ***Lexington Housing Partnership Board***

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### **Meeting Minutes for February 25, 2021**

Attendees: Bob Burbidge, Harriet Cohen, Nancy Corcoran-Ronchetti, Jeri Foutter, Mary Haskell, Paul Linton, Robert Peters, Bob Pressman, Mark Sandeen, Melinda Walker, Betsey Weiss

Absent: Rich McDonough, Wendy Manz, Melanie Thompson

Guests: Matt Daggett, Kristen Elsworthy, Bill Kennedy, Carol Kowalski, Elizabeth Rust

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 7:03.

#### **2. Affordable Housing Trusts**

As part of the Select Board 2-year goal setting, Ms. Kowalski is preparing information regarding Housing Trusts. She shared her presentation with the HPB.

Affordable Housing Trusts are like a bank account – they can receive funds, give flexibility and provide liquidity to act on opportunities. They are municipal entities. Typically, they do not build affordable housing. AHTs are created by a majority vote at Town Meeting.

Housing Development Corporations *may* be constituted without being subject to procurement law. An HDC *may* be subject to prevailing wage laws. HDCs can receive funds and can construct, secure, and improve affordable housing. The HDCs may be landlords.

Resources: Mass Housing Partnership ([mhp.net](http://mhp.net)), Housing Corp of Arlington ([housingcorporarlington.org](http://housingcorporarlington.org)),

Ms. Rust shared her perspective on AHTs and HDCs.

Ms. Rust and Ms. Kowalski answered questions from the meeting participants. They noted that revenues may come from the CPA, through fundraising, or other avenues. The advantage of not being subject to procurement law (if permitted) is to avoid a 30-35% surcharge on wages. This surcharge is not paid by private developers and, if required, makes HDC housing development uncompetitive.

If an AHT is created, it could be funded with the Town Stabilization Fund. The Stabilization Fund would then be a vehicle for transferring funds to an AHT. The transfer would require Town Meeting approval.

Ms. Foutter suggested that we have an agenda item for the March meeting on whether the HPB supports establishing an AHT and HDC in Lexington. Ms. Foutter, Ms. Weiss, and Ms. Cohen volunteered to draft a letter for discussion and a vote in the March meeting.

#### **3. LexHAB Campaign**

Mr. Burbidge, chair of LexHAB, spoke about a long-term resident who wanted to ensure his home was not a tear-down and did want the house to be used for affordable housing. This prompted Mr. Burbidge to propose a campaign to identify other residents who might want to do



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the same. LexHAB has reached out to Seven Hills Communications to create a plan to move forward with this initiative. Ms. Elsworthy, of Seven Hills Communications, gave an overview of the efforts to create awareness in the community. The target “go-live” date for the campaign is fall into winter this year.

Mr. Burbidge will stay in touch with the HPB regarding this campaign.

#### **4. Article 36**

Mr. Daggett provided the update he had provided to the Select Board. The proposed linkage fee would apply to new commercial construction over the 30,000 square footage (e.g., if 35,000 square feet, would pay the surcharge on 5,000 square feet). The surcharge would help to fund community housing. This is similar to surcharge fees in Boston, Cambridge, and other local communities.

Mr. Daggett responded to questions and comments from the attendees.

#### **5. Board Member Updates**

- **Planning Board**

The Planning Board is working on its articles that are coming before Town Meeting and on its recommendations of relevant articles for Town Meeting. Article 45, Phase 2 of Hartwell Avenue, is expected to generate the most interest at the Planning Board. Two new board members will be elected on March 1.

- **LexHAB**

The next meeting is March 4. The Vine Street development is a focus of LexHAB’s work. LexHAB met with the neighbors and received good feedback. Mr. Burbidge thinks that they will coalesce on six units at Vine Street. LexHAB is also working on a revision of their policies and procedures. Work is also underway to work with the Town Sustainability Director to improve the sustainability of both current and future LexHAB housing.

Mr. Pressman recommended that anyone not on the Zoom discussion with LexHAB and the neighbors watch the recording on LexMedia.

- **Lexington Housing Authority**

No update at this meeting.

- **Council on Aging**

No update at this meeting.

- **SPRD**

The SPRD Committee has not met since December, so there is no update for SPRD. Hosmer House update: The Hosmer House Working Group has written a letter to the Select Board with its recommendations. Mr. Sandeen said that a Hosmer House discussion is not currently on the Select Board agenda.

- **CPC**

Ms. Walker said that she is suggesting a twice annual funding cycle through the CPC as the Town is moving towards twice annual Town Meetings.



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**6. Approve Prior Minutes**

Mr. Peters moved a motion to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2021 meeting of the HPB. Ms. Walker seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**7. New Business**

Mr. Linton gave an overview of the discussion with Kathy Santos, Town Webmaster. She moved the website to the Town website.

**8. Set Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, March 23, at 7:00 pm.

**9. Adjournment**

Ms. Cohen moved adjournment, Ms. Weiss seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:09 pm.