

HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
February 16, 2022
VIRTUAL MEETING

HAB Members: Roger Blood, Heather Hamilton, Mike Jacobs, Steve Heikin, Rita McNally, Pam Goodman, Jennifer Raitt, Ginny Vaz, and Shawn O'Neil.

Staff: Virginia Bullock, Joe Viola, and David Guzman

Guests: Deborah Brown and Paul Harris

Meeting was called to order at 5:36 pm by Roger Blood.

- HAB Member role call: Roger Blood, Heather Hamilton, Jenny Raitt, Mike Jacobs, Steve Heikin, Rita McNally, Rita McNally, Ginny Vaz, and Shawn O'Neal.
- Staff role call: Virginia Bullock, Joe Viola, and David Guzman.

1. Approval of minutes from HAB meeting January 19 2022

At 5:38 p.m. Roger Blood made motion for minutes approval. Pam and Rita seconded. Heather, Mike, Steve, Jenny, Rita, Pam, and Shawn approved the minutes. Ginny abstained because she has not completed board training and Town Clerk's swearing in.

2. Inclusionary Zoning Warrant Article on Assisted Living: Discussion & Vote

- There were technical issues with being able to show the article on screen on Zoom
- Virginia asked that HAB members refer to the materials package for the HAB meeting

To open discussion, Roger moved to approve the Inclusionary Zoning Warrant Article at 5:44. Pam seconded.

- Roger said, since prior HAB meeting, he interviewed several additional sources having experience with assisted living for validation, further insight, or disagreement for what HAB would be bringing forward to Town Meeting. Roger talked to 2Life, Hebrew Senior Life Newbridge, National Development, Epoch Senior Living (has affordable component project in Wellesley), LCB Senior Living, Springwell, an assisted living expert consultant, and the National Center for Assisted Living which had done a detailed study on assisted living affordability.
- Mike spoke to the Grantham Group (affordable tax credit project targeting 50% AMI in Concord)
- Roger talked about the information he gained through the interviews. The people Roger spoke to at 2Life and Hebrew Senior Life agreed that the 65% of income for affordable assisted living units for this targeted income group would have an ample amount of money left over after

paying for the assisted living rent and services package.

- Roger said that, unlike other affordable housing programs, Inclusionary Zoning does not rely on public subsidies to create the affordable units. These affordable assisted living units would be helping people who cannot afford market rate assisted living, but are not eligible for deep subsidy units.
- Roger mentioned that Jonathan (not present at meeting) had concerns at the last meeting but is comfortable with the current proposal.
- Virginia reminded the board that the financial numbers were part of the package for this HAB meeting.
- Ginny asked the page those financials are on, confirming it was page 15. She asked if the numbers were basically the same from the original proposal.
- Roger replied the 65% is the same. The only comparable they found was 75% at the Epoch assisted living project in Wellesley (Newton Lower Falls)
- Ginny said that even though she cannot vote on this, she would not support this article. She said that 65% is too high and does not want to set the precedent for other cities and towns. Ginny added that people who would be living in the units were not consulted in the research.
- Pam said that it does sound like a high percentage but it is impossible to create assisted living housing for this income tier at a lower percentage. She added unless you include “shelter rent” and include the appropriate number for other services, that would be provided in figuring out what the rent should be. Pam said that for the amount of services, 65-75% of their income is about what people can and will pay.
- Ginny replied that she still thinks the amount is too high. She had spoken with Roger about possibly lowering the number of required affordable units in order to lower the percentage of income the units would require.
- Rita agreed with Ginny and doesn’t think there has been enough input from the public and we are rushing. Rita said she would likely be a user of these type of units. She said she would like to lower it to 55%.
- Virginia said the rent is set. It is not based on the occupant’s income. It’s based on a certain income level (close to or at 80% of Area Median Income). It’s not for people of very low income. This means they would have around \$1,300 to \$2,100 per month left after paying for assisted living (rent, meals, services, etc.).
- Ginny clarified that that’s pre-tax dollars. She added that the project in Wellesley who have the percentage of income set at 75%, has set the precedent really high. Ginny said we are also setting it really high at 65%. She did not agree with this percentage.

- Jenny asked Roger where this idea came from and why it's important to do now.
- Roger said that assisted living has always been included in our bylaws as required for an affordable housing contribution. But "assisted living" is not defined in the current bylaw, which also refers to life care, which has changed since the original bylaw was adopted and should be removed. Also, the bylaw's definition of an affordable unit in terms of the payment-to-income ratio does not work for assisted living. He said, although this is not urgent, the need to address this became more apparent in 2021 when we had an inclusionary zoning assisted living project brought to the staff and to the HAB.
- Mike said the existing bylaw needed to be cleaned up. The bylaw talks about CCRCs rather than assisted living. CCRCs are not common. We need to also clean up definitions. Mike also said that assisted living is for frail seniors adding that the average length of stay is 18-24 months. He also went into programs covering personal care and the types of people who use assisted living.
- Steve said that there is no imminent need for doing this but doing it now would get it to Town Meeting in the spring. Steve said we don't have many assisted living facilities in Brookline. He said that Newton is only looking at 5% of units to be affordable. Steve said he would rather get more units at 15% than get only a few or none by lowering the amount of income. He asked the percentage of income Newton requires.
- Virginia said she thought it was 30% of 80% AMI but she's not sure. She added that currently the zoning bylaw does not work for assisted living so we need to change it. Virginia added that generally inclusionary zoning projects have served more middle income people while other affordable housing projects that use trust funds are more income-based like public housing.
- Rita asked, who was the "we" who was studying this for the last year? Roger responded that it has been mainly himself and Mike.
- Mike said that "real" affordable housing requires millions of dollars. He talked about a project in Concord that has large subsidies from different sources and is targeting 50% of AMI and is a different scenario than inclusionary zoning.
- Roger said the 65% of income being recommended didn't come from developers but from a large study of assisted living which resulted in a U.S. Senate Bill which included the 65% standard for HUD to use in proposed assisted living regulations..
- Rita asked if any extra benefits go to the developer if they have affordable assisted living units. Roger answered that in Brookline they would get to build the project where they wouldn't be able to otherwise. They would be providing the subsidy for the required affordable units from their profit.

Roger moved the vote at 6:13 p.m. Mike, Steve, Pam, and Roger voted "yes". Rita, Jenny, and Shawn voted no. Ginny would have voted "no" if she had been able to vote.

- Jenny said the proposed amendment language is a fix that also creates a new policy. She explained that we need to think about who we're consulting in the process and who the

beneficiaries might be. This may change how we go about thinking about financial sources to accommodate different people who need this type of housing.

3. Update on Housing Production Plan; Second Community Forum on February 23rd

- Joe gave an update on the consultant team for the Housing Production Plan update process. He gave an overview of the last community forum on January 26th and the progress since the previous HPP.
- Joe told the HAB what the next public forum, which will address developing common values and goals for future housing, will be held on February 23rd.

4. Presentation on ARPA Funding Request - Deborah Brown, Board President, Brookline Improvement Coalition (BIC)

- Deborah gave a presentation about ARPA funding and BIC funding needs. She showed details on BIC's \$6.8 million dollar request and what the money would go toward.
- Program uses include Operations, Capital Improvements, Mental Health Services, Guaranteed Income Pilot, and Property Acquisition.
- Paul Harris (BIC Board Member) introduced himself.
- Pam agreed that BIC's Beacon Street property could use mental health services but thinks Pine Street Inn, which operates the property, may be a better fit for these services. Deborah said Pine Street Inn would be providing the services. Pam also said it is critical that BIC's properties are put on a stable financial and capital footing. Pam said that the request for capital funding seems high. Pam also said she thought another entity would be better suited for the Guaranteed Capital Income Pilot. Deborah said that they had a capital needs assessment done. Pam asked that Deborah provide the report to staff and HAB.
- Ginny asked that HAB ask presenters what resources and capabilities are available, rather than assuming that the BIC organization hasn't done something.
- Deborah said that most Guaranteed Income Pilots are done by public entities.
- Steve asked about Pine Street providing SRO services for the Beacon Street property. Steve also asked if BIC is requesting CDBG funding and for what types of things. Pam replied that the residents are agitated probably as a result of COVID and that BIC has a responsibility to raise funds for the Beacon Street property's services because they own the property. ARPA funding has a focus on helping the homeless and the mental health clinician would be a good fit. Deborah said that the roofing repair has been delayed because COVID affected the roofer's family. She said they are asking for the fire detectors to be hard wired with CDBG funding.
- Virginia said that the properties BIC owns were purchased with help of federal funds from the Town. Virginia said that capital improvements should be the first priority.

- Pam asked how many units BIC owns. Deborah replied that both properties have a total of 21 units.
- Mike asked details about financing BIC's properties and said that we need to work with BIC to come up with a plan before refinancing a balloon payment due in 2025. Deborah said they are working on that. Mike also asked if they are owned by the same entity. Deborah said yes, by the same entity. Deborah and Mike talked about some possible financial strategies.
- Virginia said she wants to work with Deborah to figure out how they can get people to help BIC with financial strategy in order to do a "workout".
- Roger said the Select Board has not yet asked HAB to advise them on ARPA funding for affordable housing. Roger voiced his concern on BIC's organizational capacity.
- Rita asked if we could see the BIC properties.
- Pam suggested to Pam that MHP could possibly hire a consultant to help structure the "workout". Pam and Virginia said they could talk to MHP.
- Shawn said that Deborah is inspiring and she wants to help with this venture.

5. Updates on ARPA Funding and Town Decisionmaking Process

- Virginia referenced the staff updates in the meeting package. She announced that the Town has officially reached the 10% level of subsidized housing under Chapter 40B's "SHI"
- Virginia said they are trying to get more details on the implications of ARPA funds in how they can be structured in tax credit deals. She also is trying to get information from DHCD if the funds would require "prevailing wages" under Davis Bacon requirements.

6. Staff Updates

- Joe said that the Negotiating committee for the Kent-Station Senior Living project will be having its final meeting soon at which time they will discuss the conversations staff has had with the developer (2Life), after which that committee will report back to the Select Board with a recommendation. Under Chapter 30A, the Negotiating Committee's work must be held in executive session, so that no further details can be shared with the HAB until it has first reported to the Select Board.

7. New Business

- None

At 7:30pm Mike moved to adjourn the HAB meeting. Rita seconded. The meeting was ended.