

Harvard Municipal Affordable Housing Trust
Meeting Minutes – December 8, 2014

Members in Attendance: Gregory Schmidt (Chair), Leo Blair, Barbara Brady (Vice-Chair), David Hopper (Treasurer), Evelyn Neuburger, Bruce Nickerson, Michelle Catalina representing Planning Board, Steve Laferriere from Metro West and 5 guests

Call to order: The meeting was called to order by the chair at 7:30 pm

Littleton Road Property

Discussion about feedback from Community Forum:

- \$ Water - Laferriere said Harvard has strict water requirements for community water sources and Metro West is NOT going to apply for any variances or waivers regarding water. Until a well is actually dug we don't know what the water situation is really going to be, but Metro West will adhere to all local, state, and federal guidelines.
- \$ Traffic - The probability is that a traffic study will need to be done. 30 new homes could mean an additional 300 trips a day, but there are currently probably thousands of trips a day through that intersection. Discussed placing curb cuts so that they have the least negative impact on traffic, and the potential for this project to bring to the forefront and offer an opportunity to address and potentially help to alleviate traffic challenges that already exist at that intersection that bounds the frontage of the property.
- \$ Density - Nickerson asked what impact selling lots would have on the development? Laferriere explained that it could impact funding, as 30 units is needed to get some of the financing for which they hope.
 - Nickerson asked about public spaces in the development. Laferriere said they expect to have most of the public space being outside - a park, track etc, but that there was also square footage accounted for in the project that could accommodate public gathering/office area.
 - Brady asked about density drivers. Distribution of units (ie would slightly larger buildings, similar to size of large area homes, both reduce appearance of density while reducing construction cost of units?) You can't lower density very much and still have all affordable. And there's not room, w appropriate density, to have enough market units to subsidize a year's reprieve from 40B on the site. Could making some owner occupied as opposed to rental help? Laferriere said that towns with municipal lots should always seek to maximize the affordable units. He also said that putting building up on the ridge is not really feasible and doing all this work for 1 or 2 affordable units doesn't really help. Nickerson added that having only 25% affordable only nets 20% gain as we will be increasing the housing supply.
- \$ Hopper questioned the minimum number of units required and what impact the existing house has on the project. Laferriere explained that the house, while historic, does not qualify for Historic Tax Credits and they will not get any break on the cost of renovations. However he thinks if they try very hard they can get the number of units down a little from 36. Metro West is committed to keeping the house, so they would seek funding from CPC for the preservation portion of the work.
- \$ Schmidt asked if any board in town can require a scaling down the project. Laferriere said, "hopefully not." Brady quoted the town's LIP procedure which suggested the planning board would not dictate size, rather they would ask if general and more qualitative town adopted LIP priorities were met. While 'friendly,' the LIPs are still 40B and exempt from local zoning.

\$ Blair suggested that density is not the overriding issue. Plan and layout are what matters. The wrong 20 unit development can be worse than the right 40 units. He suggested we not get too lost in the numbers, but rather focus on the layout and design.

- Suggestions for changes to look at in design: curb cut locations (possibly enter on Pinnacle and exit on Littleton, design options to consolidate units into fewer buildings along Pinnacle, and perhaps using area of barn structure, optimize number of units relative to character of design and neighborhood.
- Nickerson asked about timing and any deadlines. Laferriere said they were going to submit “pre-applications” for grants, but not having a P&S might hinder their requests. Site control is important in getting grants, and would also be necessary to spend time on revisiting design- Blair said Metro West has already put a good deal of money into the project and it is time for us to show good faith to them.

Blair moved that the chair instruct town council to draft a preliminary agreement for sale of the property to Metro West. This would allow work to continue. Nickerson 2nd.

After some discussion about MAHT and Planning Board procedure, the motion was passed unanimously.

Chair allowed a few minutes of comments and questions from members of the community.

Minutes Of November Meeting:

Blair moved and Nickerson seconded that we approve the November minutes, subject to correction of noted non-substantive typos. Passed unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report:

Nickerson moved and Blair seconded that treasurer’s report be accepted.

Discussion about checking account. Opened as of today, Greg will deposit check tomorrow. David will write checks for near future.

New Member:

Hopper announced that Manny Lindo has volunteered to serve on the trust. Schmidt will contact to confirm his interest, and invite him to January meeting. If Trustees then approve, they will recommend to the Selectmen that they appoint him to the Trust.

Blair moved to adjourn. Hopper seconded. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:11 PM

Next meeting January 12

Respectfully submitted by Greg Schmidt