

Town of Harvard Municipal Affordable Housing Trust
Minutes, June 23 Meeting

Attendance: Barbara Brady, Greg Schmidt, Bruce Nickerson, Leo Blair, David Hopper
Guests: Steve Hierman, Pat Jennings, Fran Nickerson, Connie Larrabee, Hank Fitek, Joan Eliyesil, Laura Andrews, Susan Guswa, Suzanne Roberts, Carlene Phillips, Pam Brown, Kim Lindo, Pam Frederick

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm

Approval of Minutes of May 27, 2014 meeting: Schmidt moved to accept the minutes. Blair seconded. The motion carried.

Blair discussed the Hildreth House Site: Since 2007 various groups in town have worked on senior housing. In the past discussions about options for the Hildreth House property, there were obstacles that led the project being shelved. Current changes in town have people talking about what seniors need and the cost of fulfilling some of those needs (in relation to long term debt).

In 2007 there was no town sewer and limited septic capacity on the Hildreth property. Now there is a town sewer system. With half of the connections made to the system, it appears that the plant is not at half capacity, meaning the system could support housing on the property. Allowing housing units connected to town water and sewer could make the site attractive to developers. The developer could build housing units and also handle expansions to Hildreth House as a private builder. This would save significant money on the project. If the town is contracts for expansions, then “prevailing wages” must be paid. A private developer can contract at lower labor rate. When the project is complete the Hildreth House expansion could be deeded back to the town. Such a deal could include betterment fees to extend the town’s leach field or for a second town well.

This would be a collaborative project drawing on The Council on Aging, Board of Selectmen, and Planning Board and is within the mission of the Trust. The Trust could help by using Trust funds for engineering and design leading to an RFP. The Hildreth House portion of the project might require some financial support from the town but the total project would generate taxes greater than any debt service. There would need to be a vote at Town Meeting to authorize the land transfer. The timeline, should this move forward, would be to present a proposal at Town Meeting next spring.

The Trustees all expressed support of the proposal, that this is a feasible project allowing various subcommittees to work together. The timing seems good as variables come into line. The project allows a discussion of Hildreth House without having to discuss money as the project would be handled by the developer. Any new construction could be used as leverage to work on the existing Hildreth House.

The chair invited comments from those visiting the meeting and all comments were in favor of moving forward. Nickerson moved that the Trustees ask Leo Blair to discuss with the Board of Selectmen the concepts discussed at this meeting, with the recommendation of this Trust. Brady seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Draft RFP Littleton Road: Brady, Schmidt and Hopper worked out the details of the final draft. The chair invited comments from those visiting the meeting. Pam Brown did not see any plans included. Nickerson explained that any plans would come from the developer. The Trust is not planning the design, but judging them as they are received. Brady outlined the process the Trust took to get to the point of producing the RFP. The Trustees felt that the land should be offered as a whole while offering criteria for its use. Any selling of parcels would need Trust approval. Nickerson read the development objectives as they appear in the RFP. The number units will be determined by the character of the approved designs. Pam Frederick and Steve Hierman expressed concern over exits/entrances and potential traffic issues in the neighborhood. Brady commented that these issues will be assessed and left open to development. Plans for parking and access should be included in any proposals received, keeping in mind the impact on the neighborhood and community. Both Blair and

Hopper reminded the group that town is involved in traffic/parking etc. process. Blair added that as proposals are received and evaluated, the community will be involved and feedback encouraged. A rough time table was shared: September through December the Trust will be considering proposals leading to negotiations and a contract in early January. Construction would start in Spring 2015.

Blair moved that the RFP be approved for distribution pending some grammatical corrections. Brady seconded. Discussion – Pam Brown asked if the traffic/exits should be included in the RFP. This is not necessary as these issues are addressed in the permitting process. There was concern for the safety of children and families due to the possible increase in traffic. Blair shared that there is a lot of through traffic in that area and that any increase would be statistically insignificant and that the driver's knowledge of the development may cause traffic to slow.

Blair moved the question.

The original motion passed unanimously.

Guests were invited to leave the meeting and the Trust moved on to making grammatical corrections to the RFP.

It was noted that the land is restricted on Chapter 61A which allows for a lower tax rate. When removed from Chapter 61A, back taxes are typically assessed. Discussion on whether this should be included in the RFP continued. Inclusion could become a point of negotiation with the developer and encourage conservation. Nickerson moved that the restriction be included in the RFP. Schmidt seconded and the motion passed.

Next steps for the RFP: it will be posted on the town website. Schmidt will send the document to area newspapers, brokers, and banks. The press release will use the project summary found in the RFP and include a link to the town website. Timeline: edits tonight, post tomorrow (6/24), notify Schmidt when posted so that he can send release.

Corbett Land – the value in the land is seen as using it as part of septic system or water supply, but not for development.

FY15 Appointments: Chair- Schmidt, Brady – Vice Chair, Hopper – Treasurer

New trustee – one member has not been attending meetings and the chair has not been able to make contact. The Trust could ask the Board of Selectmen to remove this person. Blair asked permission to reach out to this person to ask if they would like to remain and if so, they need to become an active participant. If not, then a new trustee can be found. The member of the Trust granted permission.

New Business: Blair passed the contact information for mowers to Hopper as the grass on the Littleton Road property should be cut. Blair move to authorize the Treasurer to spend up to \$500 to have the property mowed. Schmidt seconded. The motion passed.

The CDC has asked for information that seems to be redundant. Nickerson will send Hopper a draft format that he has developed. Hopper can fill out the report and forward to CDC.

PATH Grant – This is a housing grant program allowing the town to apply for up to \$25,000. The funds can be used in project planning (feasibility studies, etc.) and may be useful in moving forward with work on the Hildreth House project.

Nickerson moved to adjourn. Schmidt seconded. Motion passed
The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Next meeting: July 7, 7 pm