

Housing Production Plan Implementation Committee

Minutes

Hybrid Meeting

May 9, 2023

Members Present: John Buckey, Becky Curran Cutting, Cathy Hoog, Barton Hyte, Kurt James, Thatcher Kezer, Teri McDonough, Lou Meyi, Erin Noonan

Meeting called to order at 3:34 p.m.

Marblehead Housing Authority's Cathy Hoog has applied for a technical assistance grant through Mass Housing Partnership (MHP) to explore redevelopment options at Broughton Rd. It should be a quick turnaround and most of the grants are in the range of \$35k, to fund a consultant for a feasibility study. The grant was specially designated for housing authorities.

Kurt inquired about the MassHousing funds and Cathy noted that their grant may be a good second step, a little further along in the process.

Becky mentioned that the MBTA technical assistance grant has a pre-procured consultant, Bohler Engineering.

Regarding leveraging public assets, in discussion about the recent school committee meeting's decision to table any vote regarding the Coffin School, several points were raised:

- After the June election, there will be a new school committee to weigh in on the future of the school. As it stands, there is not a consensus among committee members whether the property can serve any further educational use for the town.
- MPS has an RFP out for the demolition of the Coffin School.
- The property is owned by the town and only the Select Board has the authority to disposition the property which requires the schools to turn the property back over to the town.
- The property loses value as it sits vacant and delays any potential revenue that can contribute to the tax base which, in turn, funds the schools and town services.

One of the three previously identified Smart Growth Overlay Districts includes Village Plaza which has already been vetted. Next steps for exploring possible redevelopment at Village Plaza are 1) contacting the landowners, 2) hosting a public forum, 3) propose a zoning bylaw change and 4) submitting an article for Town Meeting warrant. Other options for Smart Growth expansion mentioned were Broughton Rd and Sewall/Pleasant Streets. Becky noted that Smart Growth has very prescriptive guidelines that steer the process.

A question was raised as to the process for proceeds of 40R and 40B funds to be allocated to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. For 40R, the monies are turned over to the town and then a vote is taken to allocate the funding at Town Meeting.

Two 40B projects, Marblehead Highlands and Sailmaker Place, will result in such funding, though it is unclear if it's the same process of allocation as 40R funds. The Marblehead Highlands project is still in process of reconciling these funds with CHAPA and MassHousing.

Several clusters of communities are engaged with Bohler Engineering for the MBTA Communities Plan technical assistance and a draft bylaw with some affordability language has been sent to Town Attorney, Lisa Mead, for review. The plan looks for 27 non-contiguous acres (in 5-acre increments) in the non-historic district.

Kurt mentioned the first community to approve zoning changes to comply with new MBTA guidelines in Massachusetts, Lexington's multi-family zoning proposal, recently passed at their Town Meeting, requiring that all buildings with 8 or more dwellings must make 15% of units affordable and 10% must be included on the SHI (Subsidized Housing Inventory). Lexington's Planning Board will begin to craft its regulations over the summer in anticipation of the Attorney General's approval.

Barton asked what the penalty is for not complying with the new state housing requirements through the MBTA Communities Act. Several HPP committee members noted that the penalties were detrimental enough to not merit contemplating that option. DHCD's penalties include communities to be deemed ineligible for state funding for infrastructure programs and other capital projects. Cathy Hoog also noted that additional state monies tied to housing authorities would limit maintenance and improvements to their properties.

In discussion regarding the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, it was noted that the fund members will meet to determine their application and approval process. The AHTF should be the last resort after federal and state funding opportunities are explored, especially because many of those grants require a local financial match.

Kurt noted that the state needs to increase the volume cap of tax-exempt bond money, as they have loaned out all authorized funding.

Erin has spoken to State Representative Jenny Armini and will follow up to invite Rep Armini and Senator Brendan Crighton to attend a meeting of the HPPIC in the future. Cathy recently met with local legislators including Rep Armini, Sen Joan Lovely, Rep Manny Cruz and others. They discussed the Economic Development bill, the reform of the public procurement process and more.

Becky proposed the creation of a dashboard of the accomplishments to date such as ADUs, the MBTA plan and more. The North Shore HOME Consortium's first round of ARPA funds focus on homelessness through an RFP process. Marblehead conducts a homeless count each February, receiving data from Marblehead Police Department. Emily Dean coordinates the McKinney-Vento Act for the homeless families of Marblehead Public Schools. The Marblehead Counseling Center social service component works with individuals seeking housing and could be a partner in data reporting next year.

The Fair Housing Committee is working on updating their website, adding resources to assist with navigating the search for affordable housing opportunities.

Next meeting date: June 27, 2023, at 3:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.