



TOWN OF TEWKSBURY LOCAL HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Meeting Minutes September 9, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. by Steve Deackoff, Chairman at the Pike House. In attendance were Laura Caplan, Greg Peters, Ron Roy, and Melissa Maniscalco. Also in attendance was Steve Sadwick, Director of Community Development, Nancy Reed, Planning Board Representative, and Melissa Johnson, Recording Secretary.

Edward Starr, Ray White, and Jim Wentworth, Board of Selectmen Representative, were not in attendance.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – April 15, 2015

Mr. Peters noted the April 15, 2015 meeting minutes state that Ms. Reed was not in attendance and she was.

MOTION: Mr. Peters made the motion to approve the April 15, 2015 meeting minutes as amended; seconded by Mr. Roy and the motion carried 5-0.

1) Housing Summit Discussion

Mr. Sadwick noted that Mr. Deackoff sent an email to the members regarding his concerns and reviewed some of the email:

- a) “As of the 2010 census, we are currently at 9.4% of the State mandate of 10%; however, according to our current housing inventory we are more at 9%.” Mr. Sadwick explained that the town is currently at approximately 9.2%. Over the course of 2010 to 2015, 466 units have been added. Mr. Sadwick reviewed the breakdown of the 466 units.
- b) Veteran’s housing. Mr. Sadwick explained that back in February he and the Town Manager met with representatives of Volunteers of America; who did a project in Somerville that was a combination of veteran’s and family housing. At the meeting, they were told that there is not a lot of demand for Veteran’s Housing in the Merrimack Valley area. Although they did say that in order for a project to work for them, they would need approximately 30-40 units. Mrs. Reed discussed how it was determined that there is not a need for Veteran’s Housing and explained that it is likely they took the vouchers into consideration. Ms. Caplan noted that she feels there

is a need and volunteered to do some additional research on this on behalf of the Partnership. Mr. Sadwick explained that he spoke with the Veteran's Agent, Lisa Davis, and Melissa Maniscalco and both have said that Veteran's on the housing waiting list get top priority. A number of veteran's are also referred to a Northeast Outreach Center in Methuen or Haverhill. As a result, there is currently a service in the area that is connecting veterans with housing. Mr. Sadwick explained that there are a lot of subgroups of veterans; some may qualify for public housing, some may qualify for the typical 40B, and the homeless veteran's. The Police Chief has been in contact with an organization called Solider On and a meeting was set up with a representative, the Town Manager, and Mr. Sadwick some time next week. It is hoped that Mr. Sadwick will be able to provide some additional information on this program at the next meeting.

Mr. Peters noted that he has heard talk that there is a developer in Town who may be seeking to do veteran's housing at the Leed's Home on East Street. Mr. Sadwick will look in to this.

- c) "Using the Well Fields and other Town owned land is right for political turmoil." Mr. Sadwick explained that this came up because a Planning Board member stood up and said that we should be using town own land and putting it back on the tax rolls and continues to push the issue. Over the summer, an intern researched the town owned parcels and there is approximately over an acre. Mr. Sadwick would like to take a closer look a these parcels. The well fields were not included in this research.

Discussion took place on the tax title properties. Mr. Sadwick discussed the Habitat for Humanity project on State Street; which was a tax title property. The tax collector can waive fees; however, they cannot waive the tax liability and this is why Habitat for Humanity had to come back for additional funds.

- d) Partnering with Non Profits to create housing. Mr. Sadwick explained that this was looked in to at the Motel Caswell site and it fell through. Another potential location has always been the Funland parcel. Mr. Sadwick explained that there is still an interest in Coalition for a Better Acre and Common Ground; which is part of Community Teamwork, in doing housing. It is a matter of finding the land.
- e) Katie Estates on East Street. Mr. Deackoff explained that the point he was making is that this type of development took \$5 million to build 32 units and the town spent almost \$2 million to maintain the units at Shawsheen Place. Mr. Deackoff feels that these larger developments have been a burden to the town's affordable housing and that the Planning Board does not care about the 10%. Ms. Reed explained that she is not speaking for the Planning Board, but there was a specific vision and reasoning for putting the overlay at the Victor Drive site. Ms. Reed further explained that if a person comes in with housing and the retail component, the bylaw is very specific that it does not require an affordable component. It is up to the Board and the developer to come to terms on this. The reason for this is to provide an incentive to provide for the growth that is needed on Main Street. The trade off is that you get the commercial component for the town. The Planning Board's focus is not primarily on affordable housing. Its focus is on positive new growth with the least impacts. Ms.

Reed noted that she cannot speak for the Board on how much they are concerned with being at 10%; but she does know that they realize the importance of being at the 10%. Ms. Reed explained that the town has received other benefits aside from affordable housing from some of these projects. Mr. Sadwick discussed the fee schedule that was established by the LHP that is still in effect and still operating on multi-family and single family projects. The formula is for “for sale” projects. Mr. Sadwick explained that for rentals; which is what is at Livingston Street and Victor Drive and the developers at both locations asked that the provision be waived and said they have a contribution they want to make and provided what it was based on. Mr. Sadwick explained that it is not technically the fee in lieu of as the developer requested the waiver from the Planning Board. Mr. Deackoff feels the Planning Board has worked backwards with the Community Village overlay. Mr. Sadwick noted that no fees were waived at Bella Woods.

Discussion took place on the apartment complex being constructed on Livingston Street.

2) Next Steps

Ms. Caplan and Mr. Sadwick will research veteran’s housing. Mr. Peters noted that discussion previously took place on having the Veteran’s Agent attend a meeting and Mr. Sadwick explained that housing is not necessarily the Veteran’s Agent specialty.

Old Business

Mr. Roy asked if Shawsheen Place has been finalized and Mr. Sadwick confirmed this and explained that the Board of Selectman have approved the agreement, the Zoning Board of Appeals issued a new comprehensive permit and a new regulatory agreement created by Mass Housing was put in place. The attorney for Shawsheen Place requested the Comprehensive Permit be put in escrow for a certain period of time due to financing. Once released, notices will go out and the appeal period will begin. The funds will be released as the units are filled.

Mr. Peters asked what the status of the old police station. Mr. Sadwick explained that the cost just for the removal of the hazardous materials is approximately \$85,000. An article will likely be presented at town meeting for this.

Adjourn.

MOTION: Mr. Deackoff made the motion to adjourn at 8:05 p.m.; seconded by Ms. Caplan and the motion carried 5-0.

Approved: 1/13/16

No new information submitted.