

**TOWN OF TEWKSBURY  
LOCAL HOUSING PARTNERSHIP MEETING  
February 16, 2021**

**Call the Meeting to Order**

Due to the Open Meeting Law policy set forth by the Governor during the current State of Emergency the meeting will be held as a virtual meeting.

Ms. Reed called the meeting to order at 7:05pm. Members present at the meeting were Nancy Reed, Vincent Fratalia, Laura Caplan, Melissa Maniscalco, Anne Marie Stronach and James McMullen. Also in attendance were Steve Sadwick and Anna McGinty. Greg Peters could not attend due to illness.

**1. Presentation by Tewksbury Home Build – Soldier On proposal Veterans Supportive Housing 1660 Main Street.**

Present for the Tewksbury Home Build was Bruce Panalaitis.

Present for Soldier On were: Peter Graham, Jim Hanley, Jim Scalise, Bruce Buckley, Michael Hagmaier

Mrs. Reed handed the item off to Mr. Fratalia as he knows the background on this item well. Vin started off by mentioning the work over several years to get this project off the ground, seed money from the AHTF, volunteers clearing the land and then Vin's phone call to Jack Downing of Soldier On, which started this process 2 years ago. Vin introduced Peter Graham, Bruce Buckley and Jim Hanley as the project team – here to present the concept and explain what Soldier On provides for the Veterans.

Bruce Buckley explained that the Veterans they serve are sometimes formerly homeless or otherwise at risk. Bruce Panalaitis had visited one of their sites to see how things operate.

Peter Graham discussed the great partnership they have with Veterans Affairs and their group started in 1994 providing services and for the last 10 years has taken it forward to permanent housing, with 191 units developed. Tewksbury will be their 9<sup>th</sup> project. Peter shared his screen and we reviewed the brochure that was provided prior to the meeting. They have sites in MA, NY, PA and NJ. They provide supportive service for Veterans and their families, contracted through Veterans Affairs (VA). Peter showed a rendering of the building and then the site plan, showing the wetland areas. Peter explained that the funding for the project will come from several sources – the land was donated, the town AHTF, State Trust Fund, Federal housing dollars and VASH (Veterans program) vouchers. After permitting, they are looking to start construction in 2022. Peter showed the rendering of the building with 4 stories and hip roof, to include 21 units, with single bedrooms.

Jim Hanley explained that the land will be graded to approximately street level, more or less.

Bruce Panalaitis mentioned that it will blend with the neighborhood, being in the area of other multi-story housing developments.

Peter Graham explained the parking as proposed being 18 spaces because they have found that their residents often do not drive or have their own cars.

The Partnership members weighed in. Mrs. Maniscalco was happy to see this come forward and she had no further questions. Mr. McMullen asked of the Dumpster could be moved out of the wetland area, but

otherwise, all set. Mrs. Stronach was excited to see the project come forward. Mrs. Caplan was concerned about the 4 stories being too high for the area and Main Street, as this has become a concern for residents in the town. Mrs. Caplan also asked if the services were going to be on site or off site. Bruce Buckley responded that this depends on the demand and that the providers will live in the area, but not on site. Mr. Fratalia mentioned that this will be 21 Units, and that they will be fully furnished, as an added benefit and for health and safety. He also mentioned that the building will be set back and so the 4 stories will look fine. They will be moving the driveway location.

Mrs. McGinty mentioned that the Planning Board will be reviewing the details, but she wanted to mention the provision for visitor parking spaces. Bruce Buckley and Peter Graham said that they will provide back up for the justification of their number of parking spaces as they move ahead to the Planning Board.

Mr. Sadwick discussed that the details will be worked out with the Planning Board and that he has met with the project team. They need to address sections 8689 #2 regarding dimensional requirements and 9415 regarding parking waivers for the permit process.

Mrs. Reed thanked the team for their thorough presentation and asked if the committee wanted to make a motion to support the concept of this project, with details to be worked out by the permitting boards.

**MOTION:** Mr. McMullen made the motion to support the concept of this project, with details to be worked out by the permitting boards.. It was seconded by Mrs. Caplan and it was voted unanimously by roll call vote. Mrs. Stronach abstained.

We thanked the project team and wished them success.

Mr. Fratalia gave us an update on the South Street Projects. The home currently being worked on will be going to Soldier On, who will be placing a Veteran family at the site.

## **2. Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION:** Mr. Fratalia made a motion to approve the Jan, 14, 2021 meeting minutes. Ms. Maniscalco seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved based on roll call with Nancy Reed, Vincent Fratalia, Laura Caplan, James McMullen and Melissa Maniscalco voting to approve.

## **3. Discussion about Administrative Assistance.**

Mrs. Reed discussed the agreement with NMCOG that was provided in the packet. This will be done through District Local Technical Assistance – DLTA- program with NMCOG. There are 2 parts – 1 being for consideration of a Regional Housing Support for 30 hours of work. #2 is work toward Identifying Housing Sites on town land for 50 hours of work. Both are contracted through the end of 2021 and start immediately. It was mentioned that NMCOG will help us go through town sites and help with the RFP process.

Mrs. Reed mentioned that we need an updated list of town parcels as it appears we did not get a complete list. Mr. Sadwick mentioned that the Open Space Committee is also reviewing the same list for land to be preserved..

Mrs. Stronach mentioned that there is a need for long term planning and asked if NMCOG can assist with this. She mentioned that we need more than just identifying the town owned sites and is the work provided by the NMCOG agreement enough to carry us through and is there a need for something in addition to NMCOG? Mr. Sadwick said that we should continue to look other consultant help and that it is good to have someone focused on the work. Mrs. Stronach asked how we should move forward. Mr. Sadwick said that the Chair and he need to take another look at all the options. This will come ahead on a future agenda.

#### **4. Trahan School Reuse discussion:**

Mrs. Reed mentioned that this item resurfaced at our last meeting, so she put it back on the agenda. She has had a conversation with the Chairman of the Reuse Committee and he has mentioned that he may open up discussion for other committees, like this one, to have input as to future uses for the site. She reiterated that last year it was discussed here that the site could be both affordable housing and a park area, keeping generally with the current footprint. It was discussed previously that it has come to light that it will cost 2 million dollars to take down the school. Mrs. Reed mentioned that we do have the AHTF that could be used to support this and CPA funds to support a new park area, with the land (6.5 acres) being divided generally in half. The question is – how do we lift a concept from a verbal discussion to something that can be presented? No one had an answer. Mrs. Stronach said that the New Elementary School Building Committee will not be weighing in on the future uses for either school. Mr. McMullen asked if the school can be renovated. Mrs. Reed mentioned that she wanted to do this in the beginning, but it was determined that its less costly to just take it down and rebuild. Mr. Sadwick agreed. Mrs. Caplan discussed that the reuse committee will do a good job on their work, but reiterated that this is great site for affordable housing because of the bus route and other amenities in the area.

#### **5. Carter Street Lot discussion:**

Mrs. Reed mentioned that this town owned lot was discovered and it is suitable for affordable housing as single family homes. The draft Town Meeting Article is for up to 3 affordable homes, which will be on 2.5 Acres. Mr. Sadwick mentioned that this is similar to the South Street lot that was about 2.75 Acres, with 3 affordable homes.

**MOTION:** Mr. Fratalia motioned to approve the article for town meeting for the lots on Carter Street as described. Mrs. Maniscalco seconded and all agreed on a roll call vote.

#### **6. Other Business:**

Mr. Sadwick mentioned that the Ames Pond Drive, 320 affordable housing unit proposal will be coming before the Board of Selectmen soon and that the Planning Board and the LHP will be invited. They are talking to abutters right now. It will be a 40B permit. Mrs. Stronach asked if we could take a more proactive role as presenting how 40B works. Mrs. Reed suggested that we put together all our housing numbers to see where we are, and also to take a look back over 10 and 20 years to see how much housing came along in those years and try to forecast what the next 10 years might look like. Then we can see where we will stand by adding 320, one way or the other people can be informed. Mr. Sadwick said that he has most of the numbers and once we get the 2020 Census it will be interesting to see if the building dept. numbers line up with the census. One question is how does the census treat In-law suites. We count them as dwelling units.

Mr. Sadwick also mentioned that the Old Police Station site is before the Planning Board right now, 18 units as rentals with 2 or 3 affordable -yet to be resolved due to review of the bylaw. Mrs. Maniscalco is

working with them on the 20 parking spaces and that buffer for the Housing Authority site on Carnation Drive. This has yet to be resolved. Mrs. Reed mentioned that there are several entities reviewing this site, so she thinks the LHP can stay away from this one for now, unless needed for some unknown reason.

**5. Adjournment**

**MOTION:** Mr. Fratalia made a motion to adjourn at 8:50 pm. Motion seconded by Mrs. Caplan. Motion unanimously approved based on roll call with Nancy Reed, Vincent Fratalia, Laura Caplan, James McMullen, and Melissa Maniscalco voting to approve.

**Approved on: March 25, 2021**