

NEWTON HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Newton Housing & Community Development Program
492 Waltham St., West Newton, MA 02465. Phone 617-796-1156. TDD/TTY 617-796-7089

September 12, 2007 MEETING MINUTES

Date: September 12, 2007
Time: 7:45 a.m.
Location: City Hall, Room 202

Members Present: Phil Herr, Josephine McNeil, John Wilson, Andrew Franklin, Liz Kirsch, Dan Violi, Henry Korman, Peter Macero, Deb Crossley, Jeanne Strickland, and Bart Lloyd

Visitors: Julio Damore, Donna Nathan and Michael Lepie

Staff: Trisha Guditz, Steve Gartrell, Margaret Siciliano

Minutes prepared for the Housing Partnership by Margaret Gibbs Siciliano, Housing Development Planner

1. July minutes: The minutes from the May Housing Partnership meeting were approved.

2. Elections for Chair and Vice Chair of the Newton Housing Partnership: Dan Violi reminded members that at the July meeting Phil Herr was nominated for Chair and Bart Lloyd for Vice Chair. Dan Violi asked the Partnership to hold an election for Chair and Vice Chair. Members of the Partnership voted unanimously to approve Phil Herr as Chair and Bart Lloyd as Vice Chair.

3. Evaluate funding request for 29 Coyne Road proposal by CAN-DO, Inc.

Following an extensive discussion of the appropriate actions to assure there being no plausible conflict of interest for any members, Josephine McNeil from CAN-DO, Inc. (applicant) and Jeanne Strickland from NCDF stepped away from the table and removed themselves as members of the Partnership for this discussion.

Phil Herr recognized that without Josephine McNeil and Jeanne Strickland as voting members the Partnership did not have a quorum for the second meeting in a row and, therefore, could not vote on the project. Phil acknowledged that the Programs and Policy Committee needs to meet to change the policy and procedures to deal with the Partnership's quorum issues.

Josephine McNeil asked the project architect to explain the site and layout. He explained that the property currently has an existing single-family home that is being rented to a low-income household. CAN-DO proposes to construct a modular duplex (each unit will have 3-bdrms) in the rear of the property (behind the existing house). One of these units will be a market rate rental unit and the other will be rented to a household at or below 80% AMI. The square footage of each modular unit is 1,344 square feet. The existing home will be a fixed HOME-designated unit and

DRAFT

rented at the High HOME rent of \$1208 and occupied by a household at or below 60% AMI. The rent levels on the operating budget reflect a Section 8 Voucher without utilities.

Josephine McNeil plans to bring the project before the Zoning Board of Appeals in October for a comprehensive permit. To date, CAN-DO has not filed a LIP application. At the Community Preservation Committee meeting on September 11, 2007, the CPC asked to see the original appraisal, wanted to know the specifics of the zoning relief, and wanted addition information on the site's storm water management. The CPC also wanted a market analysis of comparable rents, which NCDF has offered to provide CAN-DO and asked Mike Duff from NHRF to conduct a capital needs assessment on the existing house.

The lot contains a number of trees and the applicants are trying to preserve as many of them as possible. The back unit drops to accommodate the grade change on the site. Soil investigations have been completed and show no problems but a 21E has not been conducted. To the greatest extent possible, the modular units will be "green" by taking advantage of the existing site layout in relation to the sun.

At the July Partnership meeting Josephine McNeil was asked to run an analysis for a homeownership development instead of rental. Josephine McNeil conducted the analysis and this was emailed it to the Partnership. She made it clear that CAN-DO is not interested in doing a homeownership development due to current market conditions.

Phil Herr opened the discussion up to the Partnership members who had not recused themselves.

Deb Crossley said she was concerned about the cost estimate of the site utilities.

The architect replied that the cost estimate is based on information from the contractor, the cost of previous jobs, and the cost of the modular units.

Deb Crossley asked if the width of the driveway could be reduced?

The architect replied that they would like to reduce the width but it was based on discussions with city planning and fire departments.

Deb Crossley asked what was meant by "green" and suggested that CAN-DO quantify the benefit and performance of the "green" modular units to the public better.

Bart Lloyd asked if the CPC had a discussion about funding availability?

Josephine McNeil responded that there wasn't much discussion and there was a desire to put funding into something other than open space.

Dan Violi asked if there is an appraisal.

Josephine McNeil responded that an appraisal was done by the bank but is not in the One Stop application.

DRAFT

Peter Macero commented that he thought the market rate rent seems high and the expenses seems high.

Josephine McNeil replied that most of the expenses are due to taxes. She worked with the assessor to calculate the tax amount. There followed a non-project-specific discussion of City assessment practices regarding deed-restricted below-market housing.

Dan Violi asked, "Do residents pay utilities?"

Josephine McNeil responded that rents are based on Newton exception rents and the utility allowance has been netted out.

Phil Herr asked, "What are the provisions for storm water management?"

The project architect explained that the site slopes to the southwest and there will be a catch basin to accommodate the run off from the driveway. A neighbor expressed a concern about drainage to the north but everything will flow to the southwest.

Bart Lloyd, in leaving at this point, stated that he thinks Coyne Road is a good project and something the Partnership should support within the context of available resources.

Dan Violi, also leaving at this point, indicated agreement while also stating that he would like to see the linear look of the building broken up.

Phil Herr then opened up the discussion for comments from the public. Three neighbors were present and spoke against the project.

Julio Damorie, an abutter at 84 Coyne Road, was concerned that the previous owner had cut down so many mature trees and described the water problems the neighborhood currently experiences. He felt that the proposed development would only exacerbate their water problems.

Donna Nathan, 414 Chestnut Street, voiced similar concerns about water run off and drainage. She explained that she has a pump on her property that pumps the water out and is on a back up generator. She was concerned that the proposed development would make her water problems worse.

Michael Lepie, 422 Chestnut Street, explained that he too has a water problem on his property. He believes there is an underground stream that runs through the properties in the neighborhood and that the proposed foundation will redirect the water onto adjacent properties. He also thinks the project is too costly, it will overcrowd the neighborhood, and create too much traffic. He submitted a letter to the Partnership that he wrote to Alderman Ted Hess-Mahan on July 7, 2007 that further explains his concerns.

Deb Crossley asked the project architect if the stream Michael Lepie is referring to is shown on any city maps.

DRAFT

The project architect replied that there is no evidence of water where the construction will be. Three to four soil tests have been conducted which have concluded that the soil is excellent and there is no evidence of water. They did find ledge and they are proposing to build above that.

Deb Crossley recommended that the CAN-DO check with city maps and the city engineering department to make sure there is not an existing stream. She believed the neighbors were making a recommendation to the developer to address site storm water issues as well as the neighborhood's water issues.

Discussion on the project concluded and Phil Herr pointed out that there was no quorum so the Partnership could not vote on the project. Since no vote was taken and the Community Preservation Committee was going to review the project, he offered to write a letter as Chair of the Partnership to the CPC.

4. Other business.

The Chair recommended that the October meeting agenda should include a vote on the Partnership's local preference policy.

Adjourn