

NEWTON HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Newton Housing & Community Development Program
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March 14, 2007 MEETING MINUTES

Date: March 14, 2007
Time: 7:45 a.m.
Location: City Hall, Room 222

Members Present: Phil Herr, Nancy Anderson, Josephine McNeil, John Wilson, Jeanne Strickland, Andrew Franklin, Maritzie Rudden, Dan Violi, Deb Crossley, Liz Kirsch, Lynne Sweet and Bart Lloyd

Guest: Steve Buchbinder, David Ennis, Peter Macero.

Staff: Trisha Guditz

Minutes prepared for the Housing Partnership by Trisha Kenyon Guditz, Housing Development Coordinator

January 10, 2007 minutes: Minutes from the January Housing Partnership meeting were approved.

254-262 Derby Street: Phil Herr read the memo from Mostue and Associates since some of the members had not received it in time to read prior to the meeting. The Newton Zoning Board of Appeals had requested that the developer hire a consultant to conduct an architectural peer review of the Derby Street project. Mostue and Associates was selected and submitted their analysis in a memo dated March 12, 2007. The team reviewed “the intensity of the development (e.g. scale and massing of the proposed buildings, open space, etc.) and”....determined whether “the two affordable units (#1 and *5) are substantially equal to the market-rate units included in the 8-unit development.”

John Wilson remarked that the proposed project created an environment that fits nicely into the neighborhood as a small scale development.

Phil Herr stated that the memo reported that there should be more open space for the residents but that this issue was not under the purview of the Housing Partnership. He went on to say that Unit #5 will have usable attic space—but no basement space—but that the Motsue report found that the unit appeared to lack a second means of egress (later found to be incorrect). He also said, and this was confirmed by Nancy Anderson, that 1.5 bathrooms for 3-bedroom units is appropriate.

Regarding the comparability of finishes, Mr. Herr said that the developer had not provided any information on Unit #1. (The unit will be completely gutted.)

Steve Buchbinder said that all the finishes will be the same but the owners of the market rate units will be able to upgrade if they choose. He also said that he will describe in a letter what the interior of Unit #1 will look like.

It was pointed out that Unit #5 does include open space and that the drawing needed to be revised to reflect this.

The members jointly expressed concern about an architectural peer review requirement for a small scale development. They questioned why significantly larger developments such as Arborpoint at Woodland Station and Covenant Residences on Commonwealth did not require such a review by the Zoning Board of Appeals. The members agreed that this requirement was an “administrative drag” on small projects.

Mr. Herr said that he will draft a letter and bring it to the Zoning Board of Appeals hearing that evening.

Warren House: David Ennis, a Newton Community Development Foundation (NCDF) board member, described a request for \$829,732 in City federal funds (\$317,573 in CDGB funds and \$512,159 in HOME funds). The funds are needed for immediate, critical work due to a leaking roof, water infiltration and falling concrete. He stated that NCDF planned to apply for CPA funds to address the second phase of work.

Mr. Ennis explained that the market rents at the Warren House are as high as they can be and there is not sufficient cash flow to address the problems with the building. He explained that NCDF cannot triage the repairs.

Lynne Sweet said that the members needed to see an operating budget.

Bart Lloyd asked if NCDF could provide more affordability (21 affordable units reduces to 15 affordable units in 2021).

Mr. Ennis explained that converting one market rate unit into an affordable unit would require even more financial resources. He said that NCDF has \$80,000 in capital reserves.

The members agreed that NCDF should be granted \$362,000 (all that is available) from FY07 City HOME and CDBG funds and that it should return to request FY08 funds since the City could not commit funds that were not available currently. (Available FY07 funds are \$61,229.34 (CDBG) and \$301,424.40 (HOME). *Subsequently, the City informed NCDF that they are not eligible for CDBG funds since 51% of the units are not reserved for low-and moderate-income residents.*

Adjourn