

MINUTES
Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust
October 28, 2015

Members present: David Carey, Chair, Marc Johnson, Michael Lombardo, Fred Mills, Matt Tobyne, and Peter Britton.

Other people present: Scott Madden, Chair of the Board of Selectmen, Sean Farrell, Board of Selectmen, William Bowler, Chair, Board of Appeals, Patrick Reffett, Director of Planning and Inspections, Andrew DeFranza, Executive Director, Harborlight Community Partners, Jen Scuteri, Town Moderator and Dorr Fox, Community Projects Coordinator.

David Carey opened the meeting at 6:05 pm.

New Business

Peter Britton noted that Bob Gray believes that the Town is not putting enough money towards seniors, especially in regards to housing. Michael Lombardo noted that there have been additional funds spent on programming for seniors. Mr. Carey noted that the Affordable Housing Trust is concerned about providing housing for all groups. Marc Johnson stated that Mr. Gray's concerns are valid. Mr. Britton questioned how the Town can keep the existing affordable housing stock affordable. He also questioned how the Town can provide affordable housing for the people who need it. Mr. Lombardo noted that there had been a closing on the Patton Ridge project, which will provide affordable housing. The payments are currently being processed.

Miles River Village

Andrew DeFranza, Executive Director of Harborlight Community Partners presented the Miles River Village project, a proposed affordable housing project in Hamilton. He explained that the property is located adjacent to the high school on twenty acres of land that had been owned by the Farnums and the Millers. The Farnum property is under agreement and the Miller property is close to being under agreement. He showed elevation drawings of the proposed project and noted that the site is flat and has no wetlands.

The units will be rented and Harborlight will retain ownership of the project. All units will be accessible to people who earn less than sixty percent below the median income. In addition, ten percent of the units will be set aside for people who make less than thirty percent below the median income, with priority going to the homeless.

He noted that the project will be constructed in phases. Phase 1 will be twenty-four family units. Phase 2 will be an additional twenty-four units. Phase 3 will be sixty units for the elderly and will be looking over the Miles River. There will be a total of

108 units, with eleven units designated for people who are homeless or making below thirty percent of the median income. The project will be phased due to the availability of tax credits.

Mr. Carey noted that the project would be considered a friendly 40B project. Mr. DeFranza stated that he hopes that the relationship between the Town and Harborlight remains good. They are hoping for a financial commitment from the Town, perhaps through HOME Funds or through the Community Preservation Act. He noted that Harborlight will spend a lot of time with neighbors hoping to gain their support for the project.

Mr. DeFranza explained that a friendly 40B is a project that everybody wants - a project where everybody in the community shows up at the ribbon cutting. It is a project that is with the Town, not against the Town.

Mr. Carey inquired how far the project gets the Town toward the affordable housing goal of ten percent. Mr. DeFranza noted that approval of the project could shut out unfriendly 40B projects for several years. Patrick Reffett noted that the Town needs 270 units to reach the ten percent goal. This project will not get the Town to ten percent, however, it will get the Town much further.

Mr. Carey noted that the project is not near the downtown. Mr. Reffett noted that the project is adjacent to the high school, which is one of the largest employers in the Town. Fred Mills noted that if a person has been teaching in the school system for awhile, they would not be eligible to live in the development. Matt Tobyne noted that they can stay as long as their income does not exceed 140 percent of the median income. Mr. Britton inquired about the design of the lottery for the units. Mr. DeFranza stated that they design it according to state requirements.

William Bowler noted that the Zoning Board of Appeals is the permit granting authority. Mr. Johnson noted that traffic will be a point of contention. He urged Harborlight to research access rights. Mr. Carey suggested starting a list of issues. Mr. DeFranza noted that there may be the need for a traffic light.

Mr. Reffett noted that the project is located at the end of a lengthy cul-de-sac. The road is longer than allowed. He questioned how Harborlight will deal with this issue. Mr. DeFranza stated that they will work with the Fire Department on this issue as well as access onto Route 1A. They will do whatever the Fire Department wishes. Mr. Johnson stated that they should look into access from the high school fields. Mr. Britton noted that if one of the house lots on Orton Road comes up for sale, it could provide additional access. Mr. Johnson noted that there may be wetlands behind some of the lots on Orton Road.

Matt Tobyne questioned whether the project requires four rounds of tax credits. Mr. DeFranza stated that it would. Mr. Reffett inquired whether there had been any outreach to the neighbors. Mr. DeFranza stated that there had been no outreach so far. They are waiting until the ownership is finalized. He believes that there are approximately thirty households they need to talk to.

Scott Maddern inquired about the project's timeline. Mr. DeFranza stated that the permit phase could last between two and four years. If they are sued, it would last even longer. Mr. Maddern stated that the Board of Selectmen could play a role in a friendly 40B project and they should be kept updated.

Mr. Tobbyne inquired whether they would consider market rate units. Mr. DeFranza stated that they would consider them if they had to. Mr. Johnson stated that there could be a 200 foot riverways setback. They should get an opinion in regards to whether they can build on that portion of the land. Mr. DeFranza stated that they would comply with the Riverways Act.

Mr. Johnson inquired who would have the authority to commit the Town to a friendly 40B. The members of the Trust discussed the issue. Mr. Lombardo noted that there is a need to discuss creative financing. Mr. Carey noted that there should be a liaison.

Mr. DeFranza stated that there are four upcoming steps for the project. First, the option agreement needs to be signed. Second, they need to resolve any access issues. The third step is the political process. They need to discuss the project with neighbors and the Planning Board. The fourth step is there needs to be a public statement and a commitment.

Minutes

Mr. Mills moved approval of the minutes of the September 30, 2015 meeting. Mr. Britton seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.