

## **Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust**

July 31, 2018 – 6 p.m.

Town Hall

HAHT Members Present: Marc Johnson, William Olson, and William Massos

HAHT Members Absent: Chair Russ Tanzer

Interim Town Manager: Robin Crosbie

Town Staff Present: Hamilton Community Projects Coordinator Dorr Fox

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Interim Town Manager Robin Crosbie opened the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT) meeting at 6:05 p.m. with a quorum present. Approximately 19 people attended the meeting.

### MINUTES—JUNE 27 and July 10, 2018

Marc Johnson made a motion to approve the June 27 minutes and the July 10 revised minutes. Bill Olson seconded the motion. The Trust voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to approve the two sets of minutes.

### LONGMEADOW PROJECT—LONGMEADOW WAY NEAR BAY ROAD

Ms. Crosbie said they were continuing the discussion from the last meeting on a conceptual plan to reduce the number of units at Longmeadow, incorporating all the suggestions and concerns.

Mr. Johnson said he met with Kristin Carlson (Senior Project Manager at Harborlight Community Partners, who was present tonight) and Tim Donovan (Harborlight's Chief Operating Officer) because Andrew DeFranza was away on vacation. Mr. Johnson gathered Harborlight's input, which he included in the document. Selectman Allison Jenkins had some questions about use of funds. He sought input from Town Counsel Donna Brewer and incorporated her input into the document, as well. All parties have seen the redlined changes and are on board so far, although not all the points have been resolved.

Mr. Johnson walked the Trust and the public through primary changes. They included:

- 1) Make it clear this involves rental housing.
- 2) While the Trust had been talking about "buy down" in their language, the real characterization is not that they were actually paying money for fewer units, but they are contributing more money toward an affordable housing project that is smaller in size, but economically doable.

- 3) A substantive change concerned timing on the issuing of funds so it wasn't completely opened-ended. (For example, as Harborlight was in the process of engineering the infrastructure, the Trust/Town can't come up with more money and change the plan. They need to have that set by a certain date.)

William Massos discussed the need to have things more defined in terms of monetary commitments. (For example, asking \$200K now on the first round and \$500K on the second round.) Mr. Johnson said they hadn't talked about a number on the second round, but when it came time for the grant agreement they could be more specific. Mr. Massos said they should think about various options that were realistic.

- 4) Harborlight wanted to make it clear the funds they cleared on the sale of the houses on the property would be net proceeds.
- 5) The Trust had asked him to fold into the agreement a way for the school system to have a mechanism to buy in.
- 6) The timing became simpler—it is now written: “before the PEL (project eligibility letter) is filed with State agencies” or “at STM” [Special Town Meeting in the fall] or “ATM” [Annual Town Meeting in the spring].
- 7) Harborlight said they'd be happy to address issues brought up concerning design criteria with the neighbors.
- 8) Harborlight's preference would be to get to a smaller project and do it in a single phase. Mr. Massos asked if they might find someone to commit to buying some of those other things [houses] in advance.
- 9) Some of the sources of financing could be from another developer, but once a deal was executed, they don't want another developer coming in and trying to change the project.
- 10) Regarding people's concerns about grant money going toward legal fees, Ms. Brewer said they should follow CPC provisions, which is that CPA funds need to go toward affordable housing.
- 11) People had asked that they lock down what happens with the Farnham property down the road. They can't really address that; they are just developing the Miller parcels.
- 12) The Ortins Road discussion previously brought up wasn't something Ms. Carlson was prepared to address in Mr. DeFranza's absence. It still needs to be resolved. Another issue not yet resolved is the binding nature of the agreement.

### **Questions:**

Ms. Crosbie asked if Mr. Johnson were going to touch base with Mr. DeFranza when he returned. He said yes. The main issue is whether the Trust could come up with a way to get Harborlight to commit to make the project smaller, perhaps reducing it from 100 to 48 units. Ms. Crosbie clarified Harborlight has not committed at this point. She suggested creating a matrix. Mr. Olson recommended using the language: how to build less density. Ms. Crosbie said some considerations were the mission of the Trust, the willingness of CPC to support the project, and the willingness of Town Meeting to support it. She inquired about a deadline. Mr. Johnson said they needed to come up with a grant agreement now or in September. She suggested they could add a clause to the warrant “subject to funding.”

Mr. Massos said much of what they were doing “has no teeth” and they needed to make the project more concrete. The Trust said a matrix would help define the “asks.” Mr. Massos said while they are calling it a grant agreement, it had the feel of a development agreement where the Trust was one of the contributors. Mr. Johnson said the cost per unit in the most expensive scenario was \$15K per unit.

Robert Borsetti, 746 Bay Road, had distributed HAHT minutes from Feb. 18, 2015 to Jan. 20, 2016. He talked about things that had happened in the past with the 108-unit project that had once been proposed. The abutters weren’t given any certified letter then. The senior housing part of the project had been shut down in favor of low-income, affordable family housing to get the funding. He discussed the wetlands and water run-off. He wasn’t happy that the Trust wanted to appropriate \$300K and appeal to the CPC to get another \$200K to “fight him as an abutter.”

Rick Mitchell, 36 Rock Maple Ave., (member of the Planning Board and Hamilton Development Corporation) said his concern was to lock down and get some surety on the number of units: The Trust has \$300K to give to this project. It wants another \$200K from the CPC to bring the number down from 100 to 89 units. It would need another \$500K to get to 69 units... For \$1M you get to 62 units, etc. To get to 48 units, they need about \$1.5M. If they subtract the \$300K they already have in grant money that means needing another \$1.2M. This was what the matrix would explain. Mr. Mitchell suggested they commit a certain amount of money up front and then Harborlight can return funds when it sells the houses on the property, as opposed to relying on Harborlight to sell the houses first. Mr. Johnson clarified they haven’t asked or pressed Harborlight to do that.

A resident who lives at 69 Ortins Road requested they not open up the cul-de-sac where her children play. Ortins residents don’t want their road to become an access road.

Norm Cramer, 4 Forest St., said to get to 48 units would cost \$1.25M. He said he was sure the Town wasn’t willing to spend that. He would like to see them reduce it to 89 units and stop there, or reduce the amount to 69 units with the sale of the houses on the property.

Bill Shields, 721 Bay Road, said the Trust has committed to 100 units on the site unless they “could help Andrew.” He would not like to have the Board sign that agreement until they had some certainty on what was going to happen with the Farnham parcel. He had asked to see agreements between Harborlight and Curt Miller. Mr. Fox said they weren’t willing to give those documents to the Town at this time. Mr. Shields commented that without the consent of the Selectmen, the Trust was willing to do this without any study of what it would do to the tax rate or any safety study.

Ms. Crosbie answered it was a conceptual agreement, just under discussion not completion. There is a lot still to happen. Mr. Shields said: then how do you approach the CPC in a week’s time and ask for another \$200K? He also didn’t like that the Town was going to do all the work for Harborlight in addition to paying the money.

Anna Siedzik, 227 Highland St., said she wanted to think high-level, big-picture, long-term. She said the Trust had been backed into a corner by the abutters. She agreed with Mr. Mitchell's plan to take some of the risk out of the sale since the scenarios are complicated. She noted if Longmeadow falls apart now, the Willow Street project also falls apart. She thought the idea to spend taxpayer money on *not* building housing was illogical.

Ms. Crosbie said the challenge was balance, not to build a big project on the backs of a certain neighborhood.

Kate Walker, 82 Ortins Road, said the Town could have moved forward on Willow Street with seven units. She said they weren't in a corner; the Trust was working with a developer and putting together a project. Ms. Crosbie noted the Trust wasn't in it alone and needed to gain consent from the CPC and Town Meeting. Ms. Walker said there weren't many terms advantageous to the Town. She said she wanted the Town to ask for a density limitation. She said she preferred market-rate rental units over 40B affordable housing. She said she thought that would be a more "friendly" option in her mind. She wanted to know if there would be any tax income for the Town.

Ms. Crosbie said if there were questions, to please email them to her.

The issue of using grant money for legal fees was again discussed and is still to be determined. The agreement previously was that Harborlight couldn't use the money to sue the Town. But not using taxpayer dollars to fight other townspeople is something they still need to figure out, as legal fees are often considered standard predevelopment costs.

Conway Felton, 719 Bay Road, said he was concerned about the project exploding in size. He said it sounded like Jim Farnham and Mr. DeFranza could still make a deal. He said as Mr. DeFranza ran into obstacles, how do they control what he wants to buy? The Trust is looking at some kind of non-compete clause. Mr. Felton said he was worried Mr. DeFranza might build more units to cover additional costs that arose. He was told that couldn't happen if the number of units were buttoned up in the agreement.

Mr. Borsetti asked when Mr. DeFranza was planning on filing a PEL. Mr. Johnson said he had the right to do that now or whenever he wants to. Ms. Crosbie responded that Mr. Johnson can get a timeline on that when he speaks with Mr. DeFranza. She repeated that if the public had questions, to email them to her by Thursday and she would forward them on.

#### DISCUSSION OF CPC GRANT FOR FALL TOWN MEETING

The next step is with the CPC. The Trust's eligibility application (for the \$200K) was approved. On Aug. 9 at 7 p.m., there will be a hearing on the funding, which is discretionary approval on behalf of the CPC, and if approved, that would lead to STM in October.

The CPC only has \$500K in its reserves and will be seeing projects come before them that will require bonding, such as the Town Hall renovation. Ms. Crosbie asked who from the Trust could attend the Aug. 9 meeting. Mr. Olson said he would be there.

Mr. DeFranza won't be returning from vacation until the week of Aug. 13.

The warrant hearing for the BOS will be Aug. 20. The Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) will be weighing in then also.

#### DISCUSSION OF LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR HAHA [HAMILTON AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVOCATES] FOR CHAPA [CITIZENS' HOUSING AND PLANNING ASSOCIATION] GRANT

Ms. Siedzik explained this is a non-monetary grant. No money changes hands. The grant is for support services—help working on community awareness and advocating for affordable housing, as well as technical support. CHAPA is an affordable housing advocacy group; they are nonprofit. They are not a developer. They can take what HAHA is doing locally to a more professional level.

The application is due by Aug. 20 and HAHA needs a letter of support to send with its application. Mr. Fox will prepare a letter for the Trust to consider at the next meeting.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

The Trust set Aug. 14 as a tentative date for its next meeting. At that point, they will have the matrix prepared by Mr. Johnson to review and will address some of the issues raised this evening. They will also discuss what happened at the CPC meeting Aug. 9 regarding the \$200K grant proposal and will continue the discussion of Longmeadow.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Massos made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. The Trust voted unanimously among those present (3-0) to adjourn the meeting.