



Lexington Housing Partnership

Meeting Minutes for March 26, 2015

Attendees: Melinda Walker, Bob Pressman, Harriet Cohen, Wendy Manz, Betsey Weiss, Nancy Corcoran-Ronchetti, Joe Pato

Absent: Paul Linton, Bill Kennedy, Mary Haskell, Jeri Foutter

Guests: Hannah Brockhaus (MetroWest Collaborative Development)

The meeting was chaired by Melinda Walker and the minutes were taken by Harriet Cohen. The meeting was called to order at 7:36 pm.

1. Approval of minutes

The LHP did not have a quorum of members at the time the minutes were reviewed and a vote was not taken.

2. Update on MetroWest 'Coffee Hours' scheduling (Ms. Brockhaus)

Ms. Brockhaus confirmed coffee hours will take place at Temple Isaiah and Hancock Church. Agenda development is in progress. The meeting will be on a week night at Temple Isaiah and after church services on a Sunday at Hancock Church. We should have dates soon shortly for the Temple Isaiah and Hancock Church coffee houses. Discussions with other organizations re coffee hours are in progress.

Ms Brockhaus reported that Don Detweiller of Temple Isaiah suggested that we again pursue support of inclusionary zoning.

3. Report on Article 9, 2015 Town Meeting, Property Purchase, 241 Grove Street, Open Space & Affordable Housing, \$618,000 (Mr. Pressman)

The Community Preservation Commission recommended \$ 755,000 for the purchase of open space and rehabilitation work on the single-family house on Grove Street, but the language in the bill precluded money for rehab, so the amount was reduced to \$618,000. A new article will be included in the warrant for the Special Town Meeting in the fall for the additional funds. LexHAB was not intending to begin the rehab work on the house until after the Fall of 2015, so the two part funding should not delay the project schedule.

4. Report on Busa developments (Mr. Pressman)

The next step is for Steve LaFerriere to finish the Local Initiative Program (LIP) application for DHCD. When the LIP application is complete, LexHAB will bring it before the Board of Selectmen approve, the LIP application will be submitted to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Mr. Pressman noted that the Town owns the deed for the Busa property, not LexHAB. It is not clear that this will be satisfactory to the DHCD.

5. Discussion on Advocacy (Ms. Walker)

Bob Bicknell, a former chair of the LHP, proposed to Ms. Walker that the LHP focus on center zoning to promote affordable housing. The consensus of the discussion was that this was a possible option for advocacy, but that it was too late for this year.

The advocacy discussion focused on comprehensive planning – Lexington needs to develop a plan to



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increase density while preserving the character of the town. The plan should include affordable housing, multi-generational housing, and senior housing – and cover the needs generally for a growing population.

The Planning Board is beginning its review of the ‘Comprehensive Plan’ which was originally published in 2002.

The League of Women Voters will be holding a First Friday Forum on April 10th entitled “The Lexington We Want — An Update.

6. New Business (Mr. Pato)

Systems Dynamics Housing Model

Mr. Pato reported that he has been contacted by an outside firm wants to work with Lexington, to do a systems dynamic model that shows how money could be used to provide an incentive to developers to build diverse housing. Mr. Pato will connect the principals with Ms. Walker for further discussion.

Demolition Delay

Mr. Pato clarified the position of the Board of Selectmen (BOS) regarding Warrant Article 43, Amend General Bylaws - Demolition Delay. The BOS requested data from the Historical Commission on the effect of the one year delay on current sales, but did not receive the data from Historical Commission. The BOS then undertook their own investigation. They concluded the current one year demolition delay was not an effective tool in preserving the town character, and also that it did not address the issue – 96% of the houses that have been torn down were not in the Historical Commission inventory.

Mr. Pato stressed that the town should focus on comprehensive measures rather than a stop gap measure that only affects a small proportion of houses in Lexington.

7. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be on Thursday, April 23.*

8. Adjournment

Ms. Cohen moved that the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Corcoran-Ronchetti seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

* Subsequent to the meeting adjournment, the next LHP meeting was scheduled for April 30.