

Minutes Affordable Housing Trust 11/16/2010

In attendance:

Trust: George Sibley,
Ruth Pino,
Mary E. Works,
Mary John Boylan,
Sarah Garcia

Absent: Michael Luster

Also: Sandy Shea, city Project Manager
Peggy Heggarty Steck, Action Inc.
Dave Marsh
Roger Corbin

Minutes of 8/24/2010 approved as amended.

Presentation from Peggy Heggarty-Steck, Director of Operations, Action inc. Ms. Steck describes her organization's recent purchase of land on Marsh Street for affordable housing. Property was already permitted for 5 new townhouses. Action Inc. reduced the number to four units to make the design more family friendly – added communal space, more light in the units, and more private yards. There will be three 2 BR and one 3 BR unit. The site has advantages: walkable to family health center, job training at the Golden Living Center nearby, and mature trees.

They plan to obtain project-based vouchers that give rental support to the intended families. They are pursuing a "one-stop" application to the state for subsidies to construct the units. Their target renter will be formerly homeless families.

Ms. Boylan: Housing First is a program of 12 units managed by the Gloucester Housing Authority in the Riverdale Housing complex that is housing for formerly homeless families. These units have been the most difficult to manager.

Ms. Steck: Our Board has had concerns and recognizes the need for intensive services.

Ms. Boylan: concern about all the families in one location.

Ms. Steck: seems like the location is part of a broader neighborhood.

Ms. Pino: [Ms. Pino assisted Action Inc. as their realtor to obtain the property.] We had looked at many multi-families. They were all in multi-family neighborhoods. It was a plus that this property is in a single family neighborhood.

Ms. Steck: We looked at a lot of sites that were not family friendly. We feel this site is.

Ms. Works: Inquired as to whether we know how many homeless families are in Gloucester.

Ms. Steck: That number comes from the city.

Ms. Garcia: The North Shore HOME Consortium conducts a count throughout the region on a designated annual date – usually in early winter. The CDBG division of Community Development receives those results.

Ms. Boylan: What is the process for the project-based vouchers to then travel with the families?

Ms. Steck: Once a family has lived in the new unit a full year, that family can move and retain a housing subsidy. The original unit also gets to keep a project-based subsidy for the next family. The Action homeless shelter now has four apartments attached to the shelter.

Ms. Garcia: Requests that Ms. Steck and Ms. Shea coordinate to ensure that the four apartments in the shelter get added to the city's subsidized housing inventory.

The AHT thanks Ms. Steck for coming to speak with them. Ms. Steck leaves.

Mr. Marsh: Introduces Mr. Corbin whom he met while working on the Maplewood Ave. School. Mr. Corbin has done extensive development in his career and is now retired from the BSC Group.

Mr. Corbin: Back under former Mayor Bell, he had talked with the Housing Coalition about looking at tax title land for housing possibilities. He did this in Concord for a successful scattered sites program. The Town provided the tax title land for next to nothing. He would be interested in looking for vacant city land for its potential for affordable housing development.

Ms. Garcia: Mentioned that the city has been quite aggressive at selling off tax title properties, but sees it as a way to bring in revenue. The city has a land disposition committee to review requests for city property.

Ms. Garcia: The City will be facing new 40b potential developments. There have been three potential sites discussed with the planning department by proponents. Perhaps Mr. Corbin would be interested in helping the planning department be proactive about managing these proposals?

Mr. Corbin: He is interested in tax title properties.

The AHT offers to find him the most recent list of city-owned vacant land.

The next meeting will be 1/18/11 at 4 p.m.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm. Submitted by: Sarah Garcia