

Arlington Redevelopment Board
Monday, October 3, 2022, at 7:30 PM
Community Center, Main Hall
27 Maple Street, Arlington, MA 02476
Meeting Minutes

This meeting was recorded by ACMi.

PRESENT: Rachel Zsembery (Chair), Eugene Benson, Kin Lau, Melisa Tintocalis, Steve Revilak

STAFF: Claire Ricker, Director of the Department of Planning and Community Development, and Kelly Lynema, Assistant Director

The Chair called the meeting to order and notified all attending that the meeting is being recorded by ACMi.

The Chair introduced the first agenda item, Public Hearing for Docket #3712 80 Broadway, and explained that the applicant has requested a continuance to Monday, November 7, 2022. Mr. Benson asked if the applicant would submit a new application, Ms. Lynema confirmed a new application would be submitted by Thursday, October, 20th.

Mr. Lau moved to continue the hearing for Docket #3712 to Monday, November 7, 2022 as requested, Mr. Benson seconded, approved 5-0.

The Chair introduced the second agenda item, Affordable Housing Trust Action Plan. Karen Kelleher, Chair of the Affordable Housing Trust, presented the Action Plan. Ms. Kelleher explained the Trust's timeline for preparing the Draft Action Plan from reviewing the Housing Production Plan, to community engagement, through plans to present the Draft Action Plan to the Select Board for approval. Ms. Kelleher said that the Trust's first strategy is to identify actions to achieve their five-year goal of completing an Affordable Housing Preservation Plan. The second strategy is to create additional affordable housing by leveraging state and federal subsidies and by getting developers to pay for it. Ms. Ricker said that the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) looks to assist with developments of 30 units or more that include affordable housing.

Mr. Lau said that Arlington does not have the land to build developments of that size so it is a challenge to get affordable housing assistance from the DHCD.

Ms. Tintocalis asked Ms. Kelleher if there is a State strategy regarding how DHCD funding is rolled out and if the town's location affects the subsidy amounts.

Ms. Kelleher said that there are many factors and variables that are considered. During outreach for the Action Plan, developers that responded to the Trust's questions said in order to create affordable housing in Arlington developers would like the Town to assist with identifying sites, identifying local financing early in the process, providing predictable permitting, and giving a clear indication of what the community wants. Ms. Kelleher said that the Trust's five-year goal is to create/permit 100+ affordable homes. Ms. Kelleher said that the third strategy is to build the financial strength of the Trust.

Mr. Lau asked if the Trust considered that with inclusionary zoning, the price of market rate units needs to increase to cover the cost of the affordable units, and whether this decreases diversity. The result is very expensive units and affordable units, but nothing in the middle. Ms. Kelleher said that she agrees that the Trust should look at the inclusionary zoning bylaw.

Mr. Lau suggested that with the move to electric vehicles, land currently used as gas stations should be considered as potential future areas of development. Mr. Lau said that he believes there is funding to clean up former gas station sites.

Mr. Benson said he thinks that the Action Plan is a wonderful plan. He said it would help if the Department of Planning and Community Development had a staff person to focus on affordable housing development in order to help the Town activate the Housing Trust's strategies.

Mr. Benson said that there is a balance between the need for new affordable housing in town and the need to retain and improve the industrial and commercial areas of town. Mr. Benson said he thinks that the Russell Common Parking lot

should be considered as a possible location for residential and commercial development. Mr. Benson said that the Town should consider supporting ongoing work on the home rule petition for a real estate transfer fee, and also support a home rule petition to establish fees for developers building single-family homes that are larger than starter homes. Fees from those policies should be paid to the Affordable Housing Trust.

Ms. Kelleher said that the Trust's consultant is looking at that possibility, that there is another community that approved a home rule petition for that use. The Chair said that this was also considered when the Board discussed the conversion of single-family to multi-family homes and whether there is potential for a linkage fee.

Mr. Benson said that he is not sure if the 100 new affordable units is a stretch goal or a realistic goal but the Town might as well go for it.

Ms. Tintocalis asked for clarification regarding the real estate transfer versus linkage. Ms. Kelleher explained that the real estate transfer fees would be a set percentage of the price of transfers of real estate over the state median purchase price. Ms. Kelleher said that after the Affordable Housing Trust Action Plan is approved the next step is to meet with real estate professionals to get their buy in. Ms. Kelleher said that this is not an annual tax but a tax that is only imposed when someone sells their house.

Ms. Tintocalis asked to review 40B versus 40R housing laws. Ms. Ricker said that her experience with 40R is from her work in gateway cities. The city receives a bonus for each affordable unit built and 40R works hand in hand with 40S which is a direct subsidy, based on construction of units with more than one bedroom and for multi-family units, which pays bonuses back to schools. Ms. Ricker said the 40S bonus offsets the impact of additional children in the school system and is very effective. Ms. Lynema said that 40R developments can be considered as another alternative to meeting the requirements for MBTA communities.

Mr. Revilak said that he knows of one case where the Town did use 40B proactively where the HCA asked for a waiver of the parking requirement for a planned project. Mr. Revilak said that he believes the goal of creating 100 affordable units in five years is achievable. Cambridge was able to build 350 units within the first year of creating their affordable housing overlay. Mr. Revilak said that the reason Arlington has such a small amount of commercial land is due to zoning changes in the past, that we should not be constrained by what is on the zoning map now.

The Chair said that without the home rule petition to fund the Affordable housing Trust, she is not sure how sustainable the other funding options are long-term. Ms. Kelleher said that some of the suggestions received were to create a percentage of Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding that goes towards affordable housing, the option of bonds, and other local strategies that are available like cell tower use. Ms. Kelleher said that we might have to get creative. Ms. Lynema said that the Affordable Housing Trust may be asking the Board for a letter of support to request for CPA funding for the next fiscal year.

The Chair introduced the third agenda item, ARB Rules and Regulations. Ms. Lynema reviewed the draft changes suggested during the Board's retreat including: potentially requiring applicants to submit a Sketch Up compatible model with their application packages, requiring solar energy system assessments, adding in family childcare as a use that is eligible for review under religious and educational uses based on the changes that were made during 2022 Special Town Meeting. Mr. Lau suggested tabling the solar energy assessment for the moment.

The Chair said that the Board will remove the references to the solar energy section until it has been approved by the Attorney General.

The Chair introduced the fourth agenda item, ARB 2023 Schedule, and Schedule Leading to 2023 Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Lau moved to approve the Board's review process and schedule leading to the 2023 Annual Town Meeting, Mr. Benson seconded, approved 5-0.

The Chair introduced the fifth agenda item, Meeting Minutes.

Mr. Lau moved to approve the 9/12/2022 meeting minutes as amended, Mr. Benson seconded, approved 4-1-0. (Ms. Tintocalis abstained as she was not in attendance for the 9/12/2022 meeting.)

The Chair reopened the fourth agenda item, to clarify the Board's 2023 meeting dates.

Mr. Benson said that the Board also has to determine the dates for review of the Board's proposed warrant articles for 2023 Annual Town Meeting.

The Chair introduced the Open Forum portion of the meeting. With no attendees wishing to speak, the Chair closed the open forum portion of the meeting.

The Chair said that she would like to add new business to the Board's meeting agendas after Open Forum.

Mr. Revilak said that he had New Business to share with the Board. Mr. Revilak said that Winchester is having a Special Town Meeting in November where they will vote on a proposed Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) bylaw. Winchester is organizing a public forum for residents and Mr. Revilak was asked to participate in creating Winchester's ADU manual.

Mr. Lau moved to adjourn, Mr. Benson seconded, approved 5-0.

Meeting adjourned.

DRAFT