

Housing @ Hildreth House Committee (H@HHC)
Meeting Minutes – December 13, 2018
Volunteers Meeting Room, Town Hall
13 Ayer Road, Harvard, MA

Members Present: Bill Barton, Pablo Carbonell, Hank Fitek Rick Maiore, Fran Nickerson, Victor Normand, Carl Sciple, Fire Chief Rick Sicard, Lucy Wallace
Staff: Chris Ryan, Director, Community & Economic Development
Guest Present: Paul Green

The meeting was convened by Chairman Rick Maiore at 8 AM.

Administrative

The minutes of the November 20, 2018 meeting were approved as presented.

Status of Project

Using Rick's recent report to the Select Board, the Committee discussed various aspects of the project's status.

Traffic: Rick reported that the first part of the Fire Station study, a traffic analysis. The analysis took into account traffic from an expanded Hildreth House (90-seat dining room), 18 condo units of housing, an expanded Fire Station, and Town Hall activities. The result of the analysis was that the site and current traffic pattern, with some minor modifications, could safely accommodate the additional vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The second part of the Fire Station study will analyze the adequacy of the building and site for current and anticipated future needs.

Project Focus Area: The Fire Station parcel will not be included in our project area. Rick believes that with some minor modification the site could handle 8 duplex units (for 16 condos).

Revised Appraisal: With a slightly smaller project, we will need a revised appraisal. Rick will ask Marie Sobalvarro to contact Avery Associates, who did the previous appraisal, to get a cost estimate for a revision and get on Avery's schedule.

Preliminary Site Plan: Lucy Wallace raised the matter of the original projects' preliminary site plan which had been approved by the Planning Board. Pablo Carbonell suggested we agree on our "program" (sq ft/unit, # bedrooms/unit, # units) and then seek a meeting with the Planning Board to give them an update on our project. Fran Nickerson raised some concern about the appeal of duplexes to Harvard residents' downsizing from single family homes. Victor Normand noted that nearly all developments designed for seniors were duplexes or other multifamily configurations. Pablo suggested the design of the duplexes be left to the developer.

Sewer Permit: Rick reported that while the Sewer Commission has written its decision denying our permit application, it had not yet filed it. The delay was caused by confusion over the possible increase in demand by the new Elementary School, which has since been resolved. There remains, therefore, the 3,000 gal/day we had originally planned on. He expects the decision to be filed following the next meeting of the Sewer Commissioners on December 19th, at which point we can file an appeal to the

Select Board. By motion made and seconded, the Committee voted unanimously to file an appeal should the current decision denying a permit be filed.

Public Outreach: With the goal of taking approval of the sale of the land to the 2019 spring Annual Town Meeting, we need to consider public outreach for this project. Several points were raised:

- An overlay zoning district for this parcel for higher density housing has been approved by the Town Meeting.
- The 2016 Master Plan calls for providing more opportunities for smaller housing for seniors wanting to downsize and stay in Harvard.
- The goal of this project is to provide housing that the town does not currently have, both in terms of cost and size of unit. Victor noted that keeping the units small will keep the market price in a more moderate range.
- Access to the proposed housing on this site will not impact access to or use of the Fire Department property (including parking) should the Fire Station ultimately remain there.

Affordability Standard: While some have advocated including 1 or 2 affordable units (to meet state's SHI), several concerns were raised. First, Fran Nickerson noted that most Harvard seniors would not qualify as the sale of their current residence would put their asset level above the allowed maximum. Victor noted that sale of affordable units requires a broader marketing effort by the developer and another complication to the timely sale of the units. Given the cost and challenge of developing this site with relatively few units, requiring an affordable component will likely discourage sale of the parcel.

Timeline

Rick suggested the following timeline and tasks to meet the 2109 spring Annual Town Meeting o May 4th:

- January 7th : meet with Planning Board to go over revised plan
- January 22nd : meet with Select Board to provide update and appeal sewer permit
- April: public outreach in *Harvard Press* and other means

Public Comment

Paul Green asked what would prevent a developer from changing our proposal for moderately priced housing and number of units once the land has been purchased. Victor noted the size of the units would drive what the market was willing to pay and that future significant changes in the configuration of units on the site would require Planning Board approval. Chris Ryan suggested another possibility: of a public-private partnership in the development of the site.

Paul also suggested reviewing prior cost estimates and offered to share (again) his spreadsheet. He also offered to work with the committee on refining our projections, noting we needed to make sure the project was economically viable. He also thinks, based on his estimates, that the cost per unit will be closer to \$500,000 than \$400,000.

Finally, Paul would like to see an affordable component to this project.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 AM.

Next meeting: January 10th at 8 AM