



Town of Harvard Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Agenda

Minutes *(approved on 3.29.2024)*

Friday, 3.15.2024

12 pm via Zoom

Members Present: *Arielle Jennings, Lisa McAteer, Charles Oliver, Angela Chang*

Others Present: *COMMUNITY MEMBERS: Paige Johnston , Peter Jackson, Bev Rodriguez*

Call Meeting to Order

12:00

- *Chair Arielle Jennings called the open meeting to order remotely at 12:00 pm, pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, An Act Making Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2023, which has suspended the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings at publicly accessible locations and allowing all public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting.*

Public Comment

12:05

Bromfield House

12:05

- Bev Rodruiguz, Old Littleton Road, shared that people have supported overwhelmingly to protect Bromfield House. She applauded the current use to serve as shelter, and urged us to keep in mind voters who have voted twice to sell the house. Do not think keeping it as a shelter is a good option. Town has spent a good deal of funding to maintain the house. Rodruguez shared an idea about contacting the owners of houses in town that have been vacant for years to see if they could be used for a similar purpose. Shared that the sale profits of the Bromfield House could support Bromfield School and Bromfield Trustees.
- Pete Jackson, Jacobs Road, shared historical context about the Bromfield House to date. Shared that there is a citizens petition that wants to extend the current lease for 5 years. In 1981 there was a court decree from Worcester Probate Court that stated the property must be used for education purposes. As long as the town owns it, it must be in educational use. 2022 Town Council wrote a petition to the probate court asking for a temporary use for transition housing, recognizing this is a noncompliant use. Temporary was not defined but the vote was for one year with option to go for 18 months. The Select Board agreed to surplus the property and Jackson does not object

to 18 month temporary use. Jackson does not feel we need another petition to extend one more year but if 2-5 years it would be needed because it goes beyond a definition of temporary housing. He is willing to work with the Select Board over the next few years.

- Paige Johnston, Littleton County Road asked a question about how “educational purposes” is defined.
- Pete Jackson, Jacobs Road shared there has been interpretations of this but that housing was not deemed an education use. Using to house the school administration did meet this requirement. The Attorney General and the Harvard Trust have a say in its use.
- Arielle Jennings shared that a Trust we want to help the Select Board and Town in exploring if the sale could have deed restrictions in its eventual sale that meet towns needs, including exploring if it could be transferred into affordable housing.
- Pete Jackson, Jacobs Road shared that as long as the town sells the property and it is sold to somebody, the Harvard Trust does not legally have a say in the matter anymore. Agree with Beverly that we want to maintain the property as is.
- Arielle shared that it will be important to look into if the new property owner could make changes to the property including developing further on the land etc..
- Pete Jackson, Jacobs Road shared that he had met with a restoration expert and said that there may be folks interested in restoring the interior to its historic purpose and there is a market out there for this.
- Pete Jackson, Jacobs Road shared that he found a Harvard Press article from 2016 shared that MAHT has looked into building 4 units on the Bromfield House land. Was a cost-analysis done.
- Arielle Jennings shared that she would look into this more. She joined the committee in 2019, so did not have context.
- Arielle Jennings named next steps which include reaching out to the Select Board about how MAHT can become involved in determining the next steps for the Bromfield House, and potentially joining a subgroup working on this; researching the 2016 article; and reaching back out to the Worcester Community Housing Inc.

Multifamily 3A Zoning

12:20

- Arielle Jennings shared that the Planning Board is currently working on finalizing the language to the Multifamily 3A Zoning Bylaw. In the bylaw there is a section about increasing affordable housing by Special Permit process to 25%. MAHT reviewed the latest language and modeled a scenario of 200 units to try to understand how the two different clauses in the bylaw could be applied if a real development were to ever be proposed. MAHT agreed to bring this analysis to the

Planning Board to consider if they want to include both clauses or just the rental clause, since the rental clause accomplishes more in terms of affordable housing for our town.

- Affordable Ownership Units. More than 120 units of which 25% of the additional units over 120 units must be affordable at 80% AMI;
 - 200 units
 - 120 base units at 10% - 12 units affordable
 - 80 additional units beyond base 120 at 25% - 20 units affordable
 - **12+20 = 32 total affordable units would be built**
 - **32 units would be added to the SHI**
- Affordable Rental Units. Any units in excess of 120 units may be allocated as rental units, of which 25% of the additional units over 120 units must be affordable at 80% AMI; A sufficient number of units above 120 units must be designated affordable such that at least 25% of rental units in the development shall be restricted to occupancy by Income Eligible Households, earning 80% or less of the area median income, and the window of affordable rent will be set at 30% of the 70% median income, to conform with 760 CMR 56.00. These restrictions will enable 100% of the development rental units to be included in the Subsidized Housing Inventory.
 - 200 units
 - 120 - 12 units affordable
 - 80 - 38 units affordable
 - **12+38 units = 50 total units would be affordable**
 - **200 units are on our SHI**
- Town meeting planning:
 - Be able to explain the impact
 - Affordable units actual vs. get credit for
 - Anticipate the questions
 - Next steps:
 - Next meeting discuss MAHT testimony at town meeting
 - AJ bring scenarios to PB on monday
 - Check on the question around whole development be rental?

Vicksburg Square

12:30

- Arielle Jennings gave an update that she has not yet reached out to the DEvens Jurisdiction Committee or Neil Angus about the Vicksburg Square development to ask the following questions below. As a next step, Arielle will work to set up a meeting.
 - What does 25% mean? 80% AMI or less? Low or moderate income 80-120% or less, at least 10% low income 80% or less, 15% will be 120% AMI or less
 - How many units in the proposed development would fall within Harvard.

- Could there be an option to buy down additional units? CPA funding usage here?

Inclusionary Housing Bylaw

12:40

- Arielle Jennings shared an update that progress made on Massachusetts Housing Partnership technical assistance application to support the Town in writing an Inclusionary Housing Bylaw. This application has been submitted by the Town Planner and we have a meeting with them in April alongside the Town Planner. - meeting in April
- MAHT discussed the timeline of when we would want to introduce this bylaw and determined that the Fall 2025 Town Meeting would be best. As a next step MAHT will confirm with the Planning Board that this works for them.

Other Business

12:50

- Arielle Jennings shared that we cannot increase our membership numbers until the Fall Town Meeting because in addition to the Select Board approving this, the Town needs to vote on it. She will be reaching out to each member to ask if they would like to continue their membership for the new fiscal year starting July 1, 2024.
- **Adjourn** **1:00**