



Affordable Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: March 1, 2022

Time: 7:30 pm

Location: Remote

Attendees: Chairperson, Brian Keating; Clerk, Lora Woodward; Members: John Ladik, Tereze Stokes, Renee D'Argento

Guests: Jennifer Gingras, Pepperell Town Planner

- **Call to Order**
7:30pm by Chair, Brian Keating

- **Acceptance of Minutes of any previous meetings**
John Ladik makes motion to accept the meeting minutes of 2/15/2022;
Tereze Stokes seconded. Vote was 5-0; Motion passes unanimously.

- **Discussion of changes to the proposed Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw**
 - Renee asked Jenny: what data supports the feeling that 25% affordable housing requirement would be unrealistic?
 - Jenny shared that it was Katy Lacy from Mass Housing Partnership's that shared that 25% was a high number for Pepperell based on the market and that Pepperell's market most matches Tyngsboro. Additionally other experts and Town Council also thought 25% was high.
 - Renee followed up with "What does 'Pepperell's market' mean?"
 - Jenny shared that there have been only two multifamily units since 2017 and eight Open Space Residential Designs (OSRDs). The bylaw would apply to a multifamily, planned unit, and OSRD.
 - Renee expressed that either the numbers work, or they don't.
 - Jenny shared that it is also about the marketability of the homes; 25% might work for a suburb closer to Boston, in Pepperell you're not going to find those numbers.
 - Renee says the land costs less, we have infrastructure here, our rents are not that low; everything is higher closer to Boston
 - Brian says if we want to develop housing, we need to encourage development.
 - Renee says that lot prices are higher in Tyngsboro or Westford than in Pepperell; we have assets here and we should not be giving them away.

- Jenny reiterated that Katy Lacy, from Mass Housing Partnership, said that 25% is not realistic, and that 10-15% outside of Boston area; she has done research on this.
- Lora asked what developers did you run the IZ bylaw by?
 - Al Patenaude, from the Planning Board, didn't seem to have qualms about it at 20%.
 - Brian said that if we do 20% then we could get a unit at 5 units or round
 - Lora shared about needing clarification on the fee-in-lieu going up a percentage toward a full unit
 - Brian brought up need to determine how to calculate the fee-in-lieu
 - Lora suggested moving forward with 20% once passed five units
 - John said we should have it start with 1 house in town
 - Brian said that it has to be a multi-family unit, 1 lot, 1 building
- Jenny says that this bylaw is a great start to affordable housing but it is not going to have a huge impact because there are only two areas in town that allow multifamily units
 - The Town hired NMCOG as a consultant for developing a 40R district
 - 40R requires 20% of all units constructed of 12 units; denser development; keep it downtown
 - If the concern is getting to 10%, IZ isn't going to do it; Renee says it is a floor
 - Jenny said 20% could work; she'd like to see examples of fee-in-lieu
- The committee discussed how to write up the table clearly
- Density bonuses should also be considered
- Brian said that giving a developer the unit versus forcing them to create a unit
- Jenny said that municipalities will allow for building on smaller lot areas
- Do density bonuses make sense for Pepperell?
 - It's a legitimate fear that a developer will come in and just build 4 units and not have to put in any affordable units. If you give a bonus density from 1-4, then get your affordable unit;
 - Renee said that suburban and urban districts are where we want to build affordable housing.
 - Brian said that for a 1-acre lot, give three density unit bonus if one is affordable.
 - 20% requirement in every zoning district; density bonus for the first four units; after the fifth unit 6-9
- Brian shared that this bylaw only applies to minimal items currently in the Town's zoning
 - Need to allow multi family by right for up to four units then allow density bonuses
- We should consider the cost of one of the units – construction cost, land costs, permitting, % of total cost of market rate unit; cash payment should be unit to total unit DHCD tax credit applicable to Pepperell.
- The committee reviewed an updated table that John put together that clarified the fee-in-lieu starting at 1 unit.
- Renee asked how the AHC can work with OSRD going down to 3 acres from 5 acres
- Lora made a motion to accept the changes to the IZ bylaw as presented by John at the March 1, 2022 Affordable Housing Committee meeting and pass it off to Town Planner Jennifer Gingras to massage further and present to the Planning Board; second Renee; 5-0; motion passes unanimously.
- **Affordable Housing Project – Methodist Church, 1 Chapel Pl. - Brian**
 - Selectboard member Mark Mathews invited Brian to a meeting at the Pepperell United Methodist Church on Chapel Place

- The church has been looking for a buyer for some time; Mark is going to bring it to the Selectboard
 - They had been asking for \$700K but appear willing to take less; they need to liquidate
 - Jenny shared that this is an excellent opportunity for an affordable housing project as part of the Adaptive Reuse Overlay District (AROD), which would apply to municipal and religious buildings; there are 30 structures in town that the AROD would apply to; the church could be reused as a multifamily housing, even though zoned for industrial. All units could be affordable.
- **Next Meeting**
Set for Tuesday, April 12, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.
 - **Adjournment**
Motion to adjourn made by Lora Woodward; Seconded by Renee D'Argento.
Voted 5-0; Motion passes unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:03pm.