



Affordable Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: April 12, 2022

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: Remote

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

Guests: Jennifer Gingras, Pepperell Town Planner; Mark Mathews, Select Board

- **Call to Order**
7:02pm by Chair, Brian Keating

- **Acceptance of Minutes of any previous meetings**
 - Renee D'Argento makes motion to accept the meeting minutes of 3/1/2022 and 3/15/2022;
 - John Ladik seconded. Vote was 4-0; Motion passes unanimously.

- **Update on 40R District and MUOD applications - Jennifer Gingras**
 - The 40R subcommittee met with Chris Hayes, Economic Development and Housing Planner for Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG), last week and Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and learned the process for creating a 40R district.
 - i. A preliminary eligibility hearing before the Planning Board, where they present the draft bylaw and show the 40R overlay and any subdistricts, is required before going to DHCD or town meeting. Final draft proposal goes to DHCD then they have 90 days to reply/approve
 - ii. Then prepare for town meeting, draft can still be modified in language, but areas need to stay the same
 - iii. Jenny thinks we can get there by fall town meeting
 - The 40R subcommittee is meeting this Thursday with Chris Hayes at NMCOG to finalize the 40R district: Railroad Square to Fitzpatrick, Senior Center lot, and Lowell Road by post office.
 - i. Brian asked: have we identified the number of units that can be created in a 40R district?
 - ii. Jenny said that would be discussed Thursday with Chris Hayes
 - iii. Renee asked about density per acre

- iv. Jenny shared the requirements; places proposed do have sewer; Pepperell is leaning toward having the overall area rather than parcel specific. Small parcels can do mixed-use housing, commercial and residential.
 - v. Renee asked about Hollis Street.
 - vi. Jenny responded that 40R has to meet one of three criteria – near transportation center, town center, highly suitable location that is walkable. Hollis doesn't meet the criteria. Not close enough to the downtown area.
 - vii. Senior center is near Lomar Park, so it is considered part of the 40R district.
- Mark Mathews – putting 40 units at the Albert Harris Center
 - i. Had a good meeting with MHP
 - ii. A lot of discussion on affordable housing
 - iii. Church on Chapel Street – MHP thought it might be a good project; Mark to go back to the Pastor;
 - iv. Brian said that MHP is a financing community development organization
 - v. they help with the RFP and help find the developer
 - vi. Lora suggested talking to Community for a Better Acre
 - vii. Jenny shared MHP provides technical assistance at no cost for communities; help develop the RFP (market and number of units) to get a developer, like CHOICE or Community for a Better Acre
- Brian asked what more densification in the zone between Railroad Square and Peter Fitz will do for the town.
 - i. Jenny mentioned the police station, Pepperell Mall. – don't want to leave any opportunities out; Pepperell is up and coming and can take advantage of opportunities if zoning is in place
 - ii. The mill site could be more developable if under 40R because it is as a right review
 - iii. Denser housing, more profit for the developer, and town gets incentive payments
 - iv. Incentive payments can go into the town's general fund
- MUOD different but works hand-in-hand with 40R; from Railroad Square to Town Hall; anything after the rotary will have different requirements; not seeing commercial after the rotary focus on housing
- Lora asked if there was an opposition group to the CPA
 - i. Mark shared that he's talked to residents that are against an additional tax; there are exemptions based on income; the website is a great resource
- **Community Preservation Act (CPA) – Mark Mathews**
 - Pepperell residents to vote via ballot on Monday, April 25
 - i. A lot of enthusiasm for the CPA
 - ii. The website Pepperell-CPA.com includes talking points and has a calculator where you put in assessed value of your home and get what the tax would be
 - iii. Media attention: BuzzKillers interview; Lowell Sun interview
 - iv. Mark has been shocked by the number of people on social media that are spreading the word
 - Selectboard approved \$200K American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to affordable housing development
 - i. Lora asked if it is going into the affordable housing trust?

- ii. Mark said yes as long as legal says it can.
 - iii. Renee asked if a property comes up quickly for sale, then trust group can make decisions to pivot
 - iv. One person approved on Affordable Housing Trust; Brian Keating was approved by the Select Board; Mark Mathews will be representing the Select Board but needs to be nominated.
 - v. Brian said we need finance people
 - vi. Trust is financial
 - vii. AHC is dreamers and visionaries and boots on the ground
- John said that on town warrant is \$50,000 for Affordable Housing Trust
- **Continue discussion of Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw and/or zoning amendments to increase Affordable housing activity.**
 - Brian should we see how we are with 40R and MUOD and then decide if IZ is necessary. He would like to see multifamily by right in another zone.
 - i. Lora shared that she likes 40R and MUOD and IZ all being part of the holistic view that our NMCOG consultant helps us move forward
 - ii. Renee concurred with Lora
 - iii. Brian expressed concern with doing too much
 - iv. Renee said it was education and good to have them together
 - Jenny can send this committee could send out a RFQ for an economic feasibility analysis on the local real estate trends – determine what the proper incentives are – the market will drive the incentives
 - Brian said that we need a zoning analysis – how can we make zoning amendments
 - Jenny said that we need a zoning overhaul – she’s already reached out for a grant support for a zoning analysis; having a consultant that would focus on the feasibility; we don’t know the trends
 - Do we have a budget to hire a consultant? MPIT budget seems to have some funds. Need to be requested by the Planning Board
 - Brian to draft it and then send to the group for feedback within Tuesday, April 26, feedback May 3; May 17th is next committee meeting, 7:30pm. Town meeting is April 9 with a possible extension to April 10.
- **Affordable Housing development proposal**
 - This was covered a bit in the 40R discussion
 - Pepperell is considering contracting with MHP to develop RFPs for the Senior center and church property for RFPs
- **Next Meeting**
Set for Tuesday, May 17, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.
- **Adjournment**
Motion to adjourn made by Lora Woodward; Seconded by Brian Keating.
Voted 4-0; Motion passes unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:17pm.