



CITY OF WATERTOWN

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617 972 6417
Fax: 617 972 6484
www.watertown-ma.gov

Minutes of Watertown Affordable Housing Trust Meeting July 10, 2024 6:08 PM, Hybrid Participation

Attendance

Members present: Cliff Cook, Jill Hyde, David Leon, Helen Oliver, Leo Patterson, Zoe Weinrobe and George Proakis. Non-members present in person: Larry Field (staff) and Alisa Gardner-Todreas. Non-members present remotely: Jacky VanLeeuwen, Laura Rice, Andrew's iPad8, Toby Reed, Mark Krackiewicz, and Joel Grimm (near the end).

I. Minutes of May 21, 2024 meeting

The minutes of the May 21, 2024 meeting were unanimously accepted with one change (David Leon was not present at the meeting).

II. Minutes of June 18, 2024 meeting

The minutes of the June 18, 2024 meeting were unanimously accepted.

III. Watertown-Belmont United Methodist Church: exploring affordable housing options

Larry said the purpose of this agenda item is to confirm that the Trust agrees to assess the Watertown-Belmont United Methodist Church site for affordable housing. Larry provided background on the site, including:

- The site's building history, starting with the church built in 1894, the standalone parsonage house built in 1897, and the additions (1924 and 1956).
- The Congregation's efforts to sell a portion of the property (about .42 acres) and recent decision to sell the entire property (an additional 1.12 acres) with a preference for uses aligning with the Congregation's mission.
- The Watertown Square Area Plan, which proposes that the City consider the site for affordable housing and community uses.

Larry said he and Cliff propose that Arrowstreet do concept plans to show how affordable housing might fit on the property reusing all or part of the existing structures and maintaining any historic landscapes. Cliff added that he, Larry and Arrowstreet did a site visit. Cliff noted that while there was potential for additions and reuse of the existing structures, the site was challenging. He expects that Arrowstreet will be able to show concept plans at the August 6 meeting.

Zoe agreed that this would be a challenging and costly site, noting that there is a recent Boston church reuse project where the cost was at or approaching \$1 million/unit. George and Leo agreed that the cost was likely to be very high.

Mark Krackiewicz noted that the Church applied for CPA funds to make masonry and bell tower repairs and there are documents relating to these needed capital improvements. Jacky VanLeeuwen asked if anyone had approached the Historic District Commission about its willingness to allow demolition of the stucco additions. Cliff said the Trust has not contacted the Commission and that the initial focus will be preserving all the existing structures. Laura Rice, who identified herself as one of seven Church trustees, provided her perspective on potential reuse of the Church property.

The Trustees agreed to have Arrowstreet prepare concept plans for affordable housing.

VI. Other Business

Larry reported on three items that will likely be on future agendas:

- The next meeting of the City Council/Planning on the Watertown Square Area Plan will be on July 16.
- The next step on Willow Park is for POAH is to submit a project eligibility application with the state this summer.
- The housing bond bill is likely to pass this summer and would include a mandatory accessory dwelling unit provision, as well as additional affordable housing resources. Depending on whether the bill is passed in time, he said the August 6 meeting might include a summary.

VII. Executive Session

Cliff said there was information to discuss in executive session pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(6), particularly to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property where an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body. The trustees voted unanimously to go into executive session and a motion to adjourn the public meeting passed unanimously at approximately 6:48 PM.