



CITY OF WATERTOWN AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

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Minutes of Watertown Affordable Housing Trust Meeting October 15, 2024 6:00 PM

Attendance

Members present: Cliff Cook, Jill Hyde (remote), Helen Oliver, David Leon, Leo Patterson, Zoe Weinrobe and George Proakis. Non-members present: Larry Field (staff), Mel Miller, Alisa Gardner-Todreas, Jacky Van Leeuwen, Josh Rosmarin, Anthony Palomba and Nicole Gardner.

I. Minutes of September 17, 2024 meeting

Minutes of the September 17, 2024 meeting were accepted 6-0 (Leo arrived after the vote).

II. Willow Park: pre-development funding request

Mel Miller of Affordable Housing (POAH) reprised the Willow Park redevelopment plans and reported on updates since the September meeting (PowerPoint attached). POAH now has formal site control and filed its Chapter 40B Project Eligibility Letter Application with the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities. As indicated in September, POAH seeks \$400,000 from the Trust to help fund pre-development activities.

Leo asked whether the project is expected to perform to Passive House standards. Mel said the project will try to certify but that the standards have been evolving so it is unclear what metrics will be required when the project is built. The trustees went over the unit mix and affordability chart. George asked what local match is usually required by the state for a project to be competitive in the funding round; Mel said this varies by city and its resources. Leo asked about the project timeline; Mel said POAH was aiming for construction in 2026. Zoe thought this was an aggressive timeline since there is a project backlog because of the state bond cap.

Cliff suggested two grant conditions: 1) affordability levels as proposed, and 2) term of affordability restriction. Mel said that the term for the public housing units would be as required by state law and that the term for the 78 new affordable units would likely be 30 years. George said this was short and suggested that, at minimum, the project would need to comply with the Community Preservation Act. Leo suggested that the grant agreement not require Passive House standards, to allow POAH flexibility to meet whatever sustainability test makes sense at the time. Likewise, Zoe and Leo agreed that the grant should cover pre-development costs incurred (including those before this

grant), to allow for flexibility. Zoe moved for approval of a \$400,000 grant, with the conditions proposed by Cliff; the motion was seconded by Jill and passed unanimously.

III. WestMetro HOME Consortium Consolidated Plan 2026-2030

Larry said that the WestMetro HOME Consortium was in the process of preparing its 2026-2030 Consolidated Plan. He outlined proposed outreach, including a listening session at the Trust for the public to comment on housing needs and strategies. Cliff and Zoe suggested that the plan include information on homelessness in Watertown. George noted that the human services assessment is being finalized and that it contains valuable information on relevant community needs. The trustees agreed to host a listening session at a Trust meeting later in the fall.

IV. Other Business

Larry reported that the Watertown Square zoning amendments would be heard on October 16 and at later dates during the fall as needed.

V. 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 6:56 PM.