



# 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](http://www.watertown-ma.gov)

### Minutes of Watertown Affordable Housing Trust Meeting March 18, 2025 6:00 PM

#### **Attendance**

Members present: Cliff Cook, David Leon, Leo Patterson, Jill Hyde, Zoe Weinrobe, George Proakis and Helen Oliver. Non-members present in person or remotely: Larry Field (staff), Alisa Gardner-Todres, Steve Magoon, Adam Schultz, Jacob Smith, and Jacky VanLeeuwen.

#### **I. Minutes of February 18, 2025 meeting**

Minutes of the February 18, 2025 meeting were accepted (5-0), as amended (noting that Helen Oliver was also not present).

#### **II. Willow Park redevelopment project: potential comments to Zoning Board of Appeals**

The Willow Park redevelopment application will be heard at the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) on March 26, 2025. The Chapter 40B process includes a call to municipal departments, boards and commissions to comment. Larry recommended that the Trust submit written comments building on those provided to the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities during the project eligibility phase. Larry summarized what was said in that letter and outlined other points the Trust might want to make:

- The application requests waiver of the Section 5.07 “inclusionary zoning” procedure, including the need to appear separately before the Trust to review the proposed affordable units. The Trust can agree that step is not needed. Larry described what is proposed by POAH for the 60 replacement public housing units and the 78 new affordable units.
- The degree to which the site and building design work (or could be improved for) income-eligible households.
- Parking demand for households in affordable units.

Trustees readily agreed that they have already seen the proposed affordability plan, that it meets the spirit of Section 5.07 and that it is not necessary for the project to return to the Trust for further review.

There was extensive discussion of parking demand, based on the MAPC “Perfect Fit” parking utilization studies and particularly the WestMetro study that covered 17 Watertown multifamily developments. Trustees felt that the proposed .8/unit ratio was appropriate. Several trustees talked about the significant cost of adding another

structured parking level. It was also noted that another level could increase neighborhood impact. Trustees discussed positive attributes of the site design, including the balance between homes/parking/open space, and the healthy distribution of unit sizes from studio to three bedrooms.

Zoe moved to authorize written comments to the ZBA along the lines discussed in the prior letter and during the meeting. The motion was seconded by Helen and passed unanimously.

**III. Fair Housing in Watertown event (April 30)**

The Trust and Human Rights Commission (HRC) will be jointly hosting a fair housing event on April 30 at 6 PM (remote only). The event will feature: Kelly Vieira/Suffolk Law's Center for Housing Justice & Policy providing a Fair Housing 101 and summarizing the recent study; excerpts from a documentary depicting the personal costs of housing discrimination; and Sophia Suarez-Friedman/Wayside Multi-Services Center to discuss the experiences of her clients looking for housing. Cliff and an HRC representative will co-moderate and discuss potential steps the City could take.

**IV. Assessor Dwelling Units Community Dialogue (March 24)**

The ADU Community Dialogue event will be March 24. So far, we expect at least 30 people. After a substantive presentation on the issue and time for Q&A, Watertown Community Conversations will facilitate breakout groups. We want to have someone knowledgeable about ADUs available to each group. Larry said we have enough coverage for this role, but it would be good to have one or two back-ups if any trustees are interested. Cliff added that he and a WCC leader appeared on WCATV to promote the event.

**V. Other Business**

Larry reported that there is a proposed project that may come before the Trust for review of its inclusionary zoning plan. The Village at Washburn is proposing 14 market rate townhouses and two affordable townhouses. No application has been filed but there was a community meeting on January 29, 2025. George added that the City is purchasing the former Sterritt Lumber site and will evaluate several potential uses, including affordable housing.

**VI. Executive Session**

Cliff said there were no matters to discuss in executive session. A motion to adjourn passed unanimously at approximately 7:04 PM.