



**Watertown Housing Partnership
Special Meeting
Meeting Minutes
December 7, 2017
Administration Building**

Members In Attendance

Fred Reynolds (Chair), Brian Costello (Watertown Housing Authority), David Leon, Torey Dean and Andrea Adams (Senior Planner, Department of Community Development & Planning (DCDP))

Others in Attendance: Tony Palomba, Councilor at Large, Attorney William York (33 Mount Auburn Street), John Freeman (33 Mount Auburn Street), and Steve Hurley (Janovsky/Hurley Architects, 33 Mount Auburn Street)

I. Review of Draft Minutes: October 17, 2017

Mr. Reynolds asked for a motion to approve the Minutes of the October meeting, noting that he'd given Ms. Adams a correction. Mr. Dean moved to approve the draft Minutes as presented. Mr. Leon seconded, and the Minutes were unanimously approved.

II. Affordable Housing Review: 33 Mount Auburn Street

Attorney York introduced the project team members for 33 Mount Auburn Street. Using site plans mounted on foamcore and interior floor plans, Attorney York and Mr. Hurley described the project and the setting.

Mr. Leon asked about the number of disabled-accessible parking spaces provided, and how that would accommodate the two proposed disabled-accessible housing units, along with providing parking for customers of the proposed retail spaces?

Attorney York noted the project was based on shared, undesignated parking for the proposed condominium units, and was asking for relief of one parking space overall.

Mr. Leon and other Partnership members asked about the views to and from the Petitioner's proposed two affordable units?

Mr. Hurley explained the relative distances to adjoining buildings, noting that the nearest residential building had been constructed on the lot line, with no setbacks.

The Partnership as a whole expressed satisfaction at the relatively large size of the units.

Mr. Reynolds asked for a motion on the Petitioner's affordable housing proposal.

Mr. Leon moved to accept the Petitioner's offer of two affordable units, as shown on Sheet A13, which showed units 2B and 3C as affordable. Mr. Leon also simultaneously moved that unit 3C would be both accessible and affordable, while unit 2B would just be affordable. Mr. Dean seconded Mr. Leon's motion. The Members voted unanimously for the motion.

III. Affordable Continuum of Care Facilities: Continued Discussion

Ms. Adams noted that the Town's definition of "Assisted Living" in the Zoning Ordinance is broad enough to encompass all types of facilities, expect memory/dementia care and skilled nursing. She said this is helpful, as the memory/dementia and skilled nursing care services costs outstrip the housing costs.

Approved 2/20/18

Councilor Palomba asked for further clarification as to what projects are required to contribute affordable units.

Ms. Adams said the Zoning is set up such that any facility that is not in the Assisted Living Overlay Zone is classified as Institutional, and therefore is not subject to Section 5.07. She noted the only facility in the Overlay Zone is Brigham House, which provides affordable assisted living.

Mr. Reynolds said the Agenda laid out the issues for dealing with affordable Continuum of Care, as he saw them. A distinction can be made between Independent Living and all other types. He said the Partnership, and Watertown, should seek a cash in lieu payment for the housing portion.

Ms. Adams noted she had taken the estimated cost of construction from the Building Permit, and divided it by the total number of units in recent apartment projects and The Residences in Watertown Square. Ms. Adams noted the result was in all cases approximately \$200,000, less than the lowest potential buyout number currently required by Section 5.07 (approximately \$329,000 to \$349,000 based on unit size).

Councilor Palomba asked if the Partnership had considered requiring affordable units from such facilities?

Mr. Leon said the Partnership had discussed this idea, and come to the conclusion that the services cost component in such facilities is intrinsically connected to the residential portion, particularly in the Assisted and Demetria/Skilled Nursing care units. The units in these facilities nevertheless still count as “dwelling units” in the Census, thereby counting against Watertown in its goal to reach a Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) of 10% or more. Recognizing these two issues, Mr. Leon said the Partnership determined that a cash in lieu payment would avoid the complicated financing issues, and at least help blunt the impact of these facilities via the SHI.

Mr. Reynolds noted another issue was the one raised by Mr. Cook: Whether such a facility must be certified to accept Group Adult Foster Care (GAFC), which reimburses at a lower rate - at 50% or 30% of Area Median Income.

Mr. Costello noted the Housing Authority is able to provide services similar to Assisted Living because Authority staff includes a behavioral specialist. He noted these services could be more efficient if the Housing Authority had staff, because privacy laws create difficulties in case management.

The Partnership requested that DCDP staff:

1. Explore the possibility of reserving funding for the Housing Authority
2. Get more information on how these facilities deal with GAFC
3. Draft Text Amendment language to make 5.07 apply to Continuum of Care facilities, except for Dementia/Skill Nursing Units, and to require a cash in lieu based on the housing unit cost

Adjourn

Mr. Reynolds asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Leon moved to adjourn the meeting, and Mr. Costello seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.