



Minutes
Housing Partnership
January 21, 2020 6:00 PM
Town Administration Building

Members In Attendance

Fred Reynolds (Chair), Cliff Cook, David Leon, Helen Oliver, Mike Lara, Watertown Housing Authority, and Steve Magoon, Department of Community Development & Planning

Others in Attendance: Town Councilor Anthony Palomba, Jennifer VanCampen (Executive Director, MetroWest Collaborative Development)

I. Review of Draft Minutes:

Mr. Reynolds asked for any amendments, hearing none, a motion was made by Cliff Cook, and seconded by Mike Lara to approve as drafted, and all members voted in favor.

II. New Housing Production Plan

40B Update- Mr. Magoon gave an update as to the certification by DHCD of “safe harbor” due to there being more than 1.5% of land area dedicated to affordable housing. This is a significant development in a number of ways, as we are likely the only municipality to achieve this designation, but more importantly it puts the Town in control of our development activity. The members proceeded to discuss the implications for the Housing Production Plan (HPP) that we have been working on, both in terms of process and content.

The members then discussed the various versions of the draft document that have been circulated. Without the threat of 40B, the planning effort may not need to follow the requirements of an HPP, as the benefits have been addressed and the State may not even certify and HPP if we have safe harbor.

Certification also gives us flexibility to consider what goals we want to pursue, and don’t need to be tethered to how they do or don’t advance us towards the goal of 10% of our housing stock. We may still aim to achieve 10%, but we may want to look at middle income, extremely low income residents.

We may want to look at our inclusionary requirement and consider increasing that number. We should look at creating a Housing Trust, which then brought up the relationship with the Community Preservation Committee and how those funds can be used for affordable housing. The Partnership also discussed the possibility of a renters assistance program of providing first month, last month and security deposit for qualifying residents.

The Partnership shifted to a discussion of how to proceed, what the process should be to develop a Plan in the next six months and what the role of the various groups should be. There was agreement that we want to have goals with actionable recommendations. We want to be clear about who we want to serve, levels of need, household types, etc.

Ms. Oliver volunteered to take a cut at drafting a set of goals utilizing the various versions we already have and the conversation of the group.

Councilor Palomba suggested that there be further discussion of a Housing Trust, Transit Oriented Development, Accessory Dwelling Units, and an adjustment to the transfer tax for affordable housing programs. Mr. Reynolds suggested that the Council choose one to move forward on, and Mr. Leon

suggested the timing isn't right to suggest the inclusionary requirement be increased to 20%. He also suggested that we need to get updated numbers regarding housing in Watertown.

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm. The next meeting will be February 17, 2019.