



# CITY OF WATERTOWN HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

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 Housing Partnership Meeting November 16, 2021 6 PM, Remote Participation Only

### **Members in Attendance**

Fred Reynolds (Chair), Cliff Cook, David Leon, Helen Oliver, Torey Dean.  
Non-members present: Larry Field (staff), Jennifer Van Campen.

#### **I. Review of Draft Minutes**

Minutes of October 19, 2021 were reviewed and approved unanimously.

#### **II. Proposed affordable housing development at 1 Rosary Drive**

Fred prefaced Jen's presentation on 1 Rosary Drive by thanking her for leading Metro West Collaborative and being such a resource for the WHP's work.

1 Rosary Drive is a former convent built in the 1960's. It consists of 55 beds, a chapel, a commercial kitchen and dining room, offices and other common areas. Metro West proposes to convert the building into a 23-unit affordable senior housing project. There would be 7 studio and 16 one-bedroom apartments. The unit sizes would range from 360 to 750 sf, with several accessible units. The kitchen and dining room would be retained for community dining and programs. Metro West is trying not to make exterior changes to the building.

There are five parking spaces associated with the building. Metro West understands that it will need to market the units to households that are willing to do without owning a car. In addition, it will look at augmenting the shuttle service that stops at 2 Rosary Drive (also an elderly affordable project).

There was discussion about whether the architect could test alternative floor plans that either add units or allow for more "square" units (most units would be long rectangles). Jen said there will be further review of the floor plans but noted that options are limited if Metro West is to keep the existing window openings and weight-bearing walls.

Jen said that there is a December 2 open house scheduled for the Public Library. She said Metro West has tried and not yet been able to have a substantive discussion with the Siena Village Condominium trustees about the proposal. Jen asked the WHP to provide a support letter for its \$1 million funding request to the Community Preservation Committee.

Larry noted that while the 103 Nichols Avenue and 1 Rosary Drive projects are theoretically competing for CPA funding, there is sufficient money to award both if the CPC thinks both are worthy. Cliff moved/David seconded that the WHP recommend CPA funding. The vote was unanimous (Torey recused himself because he lives near the project). Fred asked Larry to draft a support letter.

### III. Continued Discussion of Accessory Dwelling Units

Larry suggested that the Chair lead a discussion of the draft [Accessory Dwelling Units](#) ordinance to resolve the highlighted issues and determine if any new issues needed to be discussed. Six points were discussed:

- Size of ADUs. Members felt that ADUs should be/probably would be smaller than 900 sf/half the floor area but agreed that it was not necessary to change the definition.
- Building types that can have ADUs. Members considered whether two-family, three-family, and/or condo units in such buildings should be allowed to have ADUs. Members agreed to keep the proposed language. The discussion did identify two drafting issues—specifying that the owner must occupy a unit as a “primary residence” and that it must be specified which is the “principal dwelling” in a two-family residence. There was also agreement that the issue of townhouse structures should be addressed.
- Detached ADUs. Members agreed that this could be added later once there was consensus that the ordinance was working well in the context of adding ADUs within the structure or as attached additions.
- New construction. Members suggested making the limit built 5 or more years before.
- Parking. While Cliff and Fred prefer to have a more flexible parking requirement, they acknowledged that the proposed requirement would address neighborhood concerns about parking.
- Compliance filings. Members asked that the text be clearer that compliance filings are annual requirements.

Fred asked Larry to produce a revised draft for the next meeting.

### IV. Updates on pending matters

#### a. Emergency rental assistance program

Jen reported that there have been 66 enrolled households over 14 months (not including 20 Housing Authority tenants). Three of those households enrolled in the last month. As previously discussed, Metro West determined in early fall that some households that previously exhausted the six months of assistance need more help—either because they ran out of RAFT funding or never completed the RAFT process. Metro West offered these households one month of assistance and a second month if they apply for RAFT. Wayside Youth Center has been working with these tenants on the RAFT applications.

The WHP’s funding for this program has now been exhausted; the remaining funds come from the Community Foundation’s state grant. Jen said there is sufficient money to continue through 2021 and that the Foundation will be able to direct new funds to the program in January. Jen said Metro West will provide the WHP with a report on the program’s effectiveness in helping Watertown tenants in housing need because of COVID.

**b. Municipal affordable housing trust**

The Council will hold a public hearing on November 23 and likely vote on creating a [Municipal Affordable Housing Trust](#). The next step will be advertising the trustee positions and going through the selection process. This is likely to take at least a month.

The Department withdrew its application for \$250,000 in CPA funding. During the CPC's discussion in October, it became clear that the committee would only allow the application to proceed if the trust were formed before the December 10 full application deadline. Formation requires selection of trustees and recording the trust instrument; this could not be achieved by December 10.

**c. Nexus Study**

A contract to do the [nexus study](#) is likely to be finalized this month, with Karl F. Seidman Consulting selected to do the work. The study is likely to start in December and conclude by June 30, 2022.

**d. St. Joseph's Hall elevator replacement**

Jen reported that the WestMetro HOME Consortium committed about \$224,000 to the elevator replacement and that MHIC has conditionally approved use of some of the project's replacement reserves. Larry noted that Watertown's HOME support for the replacement (about \$146,000) can be finalized after the process of amending the FY2022 Action Plan is completed. Jen said that Metro West has requested an updated proposal from the contractor and is working with HUD to obtain its approval to proceed.

**e. Local preference policy**

The council committees began discussing the [local preference policy](#) on September 16 but tabled action; no further meeting has been scheduled yet.

**IV. Other business**

Members agreed that the December meeting would be cancelled unless there are pressing matters to consider.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.