



CITY OF WATERTOWN AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

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Minutes of Watertown Affordable Housing Trust Meeting December 19, 2023 6:00PM, Hybrid Participation

Members in Attendance

Cliff Cook, Jill Hyde, David Leon, Helen Oliver, George Proakis, Leo Patterson and Zoe Weinrobe. Non-members present in person: Larry Field (staff), Alisa Gardner-Todreas. Non-members present remotely: Jacky VanLeeuwen, Linda Scott, Nicole Gardner, Liz Cremens, Adam Schultz, Mark Krackiewicz, and Josh Rosmarin.

I. Minutes of October 16, 2023 meeting

The minutes of the September 13, 2023 meeting were unanimously accepted.

II. Alternative Roles for the Trust in Affordable Housing Development

After a brief presentation by staff (attached), Cliff led a discussion on alternative roles the Trust might play in projects it identifies. The three alternatives outlined were: the Trust acquiring the property (or site control) and taking the lead throughout; the Trust acquiring site control and assigning it to an affordable housing developer; and the Trust bringing the site to an affordable housing developer, who takes the lead.

There was agreement that it would usually be better for the Trust to bring a potential site to a developer. At this stage in the Trust's life, trustees thought it would be more realistic to have an experienced developer take the lead and bear the risk on a significant project. There was more discussion on the option of obtaining site control and assigning it. Zoe noted that Chapter 30B (disposition of public assets) would make that costly and cumbersome. George agreed but said that if there was a compelling reason (e.g., urgency in obtaining site control), that option could make sense. Others agreed that it was useful to proceed with the assumption that the Trust would play a supportive role, without foreclosing the other options.

III. Potential Zoning and Permitting Changes to Facilitate Affordable and Mixed-Income Projects

Larry made a presentation (attached) providing background on the current zoning applicable to the three major districts in the Watertown Square "study area" (Central Business, Limited Business and Industrial-3). Cliff suggested and others agreed that this item should be put on a future meeting agenda for members to discuss.

IV. Other Business

Larry reported that the January 16 meeting would need to be re-scheduled because of a conflicting training session for board and commission members. He will send out a Doodle poll. He also reported that the RFP responses for the Willow Park redevelopment are due January 10 and for HOME-ARP funding February 9. He noted that the City Council voted to fund four housing-related proposals for at or close to the requested amount (McSherry Gardens, Marshall Place, Direct Assistance/Metro West Collaborative and Counseling Services/Wayside).

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 not reconvene the public meeting passed unanimously at approximately 7:05 PM.