

**TOWN OF FRANKLIN
MUNICIPAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST**

**June 29, 2021
9:00 AM
Meeting Held via ZOOM**

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Christopher Vericker, Mary Ann Bertone, Christopher Feeley, Maxine Kinhart, Judy Pfeffer, Jamie Hellen

Members Not in Attendance: Robert Keras

Others Present: Bryan Taberner, Director of Community Planning and Development

As stated on the agenda, due to the ongoing concerns regarding the COVID-19 virus, the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust will conduct a Remote/Virtual Meeting. In an effort to ensure citizen engagement and comply with open meeting law regulations, citizens will be able to dial into the meeting using the provided phone number, or citizens can participate by using the Zoom link also provided on the agenda.

Chair Vericker called the above-captioned Remote/Virtual Meeting to order this date at 9:00 AM.

Housing Production Plan – Update – Bryan Taberner

Mr. Taberner stated that more than two dozen responses were received from the public regarding the Housing Production Plan (HPP). Most individuals responding were 100 percent in favor of it as written; there has not been a lot of change recommended. He stated that there are a few things he will take a look at, but in general, it will not be difficult to update and prepare the final version for the Planning Board and Town Council. He stated that in addition to the Housing Trust meeting, the HPP was discussed at the Economic Development Committee meeting and the Planning Board meeting. He stated that at the Planning Board meeting there were some things said by some of the members regarding items that they were not crazy about. He stated that the Planning Board, along with Town Council, needs to approve the document before it is sent to the State. The only problem he sees is that he may need to make the plan less aggressive in one way or another. He is hoping the Planning Board will get onboard with it. He may have to change some wording such as *adopt* to *consider*. He noted that the public comment period ended last Friday. The comments will go into the document as an attachment. He reiterated that there were few recommended changes. After that, the meetings with the Planning Board and Town Council will be scheduled; hopefully, they will support the plan. Then the document goes to the State for endorsement. He stated that affordable housing is an important aspect of the community. He discussed that if the Planning Board does not support the HPP, there will be a plan that was not adopted by Planning Board. Hopefully, it would be supported by Town Council, and it could still be used in the Master Plan process. He stated that the plan is not a requirement as the Town is over the 10 percent right now.

Ms. Pfeffer stated that she has heard a number of comments from people that they do not want any more affordable housing. Mr. Taberner stated that he has not received much opposition at meetings or in writing to the plan, except from the Planning Board. Town Administrator Jamie Hellen stated that he has heard some of the same sentiment. He stated that he thinks it is absurd that some people would say that we do not need affordable housing; it is clear that any affordable housing would be welcomed. He stated that he has also heard from people that they do not want any more market rate housing. He stated that he thinks many of the comments off the record or not formally submitted

represent the polarized extremes in the community. Mr. Taberner stated that some things he has heard, but not formally, are that people living here do not want to see additional development, growth, traffic, or population; they do not want the Town to lose the character it has.

Update on Franklin Ridge Senior Housing – Jon Juhl

Mr. Juhl stated that Mr. Taberner did much work with Mr. Doug Martin on the housing choice application that went in last December; the money was received from the State. He noted that the housing choice application was for four projects including increased water pressure for Eaton Place. Mr. Juhl stated that Mr. Martin is taking the lead in pulling all the elements together for Franklin Ridge. He stated that we are now working on the pumping station in terms of its design. Mr. Martin met with us and CDM Smith, the contractor selected by the Town to do the design work. They are working with the Town to do borings. He explained that some tree removal is needed in order to do some of the borings to see where the water lines would need to go, and some additional wetland studies need to be done which is being undertaken by Goddard, Inc. He stated that it is anticipated there will be a draft design by CDM by October/November and a final approval of the design in December. He stated that the kick-off meeting was about one month ago; last week, at the second meeting, we met with the fire chief. He stated that the fire that happened adjacent to this property was discussed. The fire chief is asking for 2,000 gallons per minute from the pumping station in order to have sufficient pressure to handle any future needs. This may cost a little more, but it will be well worth it to have sufficient pressure. He noted that this will require some pressure reducing capabilities in each of the building systems. He stated that this is a key component in developing Franklin Ridge. He stated there was feedback from DHCD regarding the design and the number of one and two bedrooms. He explained that DHCD was concerned about the number of two bedrooms; there were 45 one bedrooms and 15 two bedrooms proposed. He stated that DHCD had some issues with another developer not being able to rent the two bedrooms. He stated that as such, it was redesigned, and now there are 54 one bedrooms and 6 two bedrooms. He noted that there are 32 exhibits in the applications; they are very thorough in terms of what the State is looking for in terms of financing. He stated that the Baker Administration is putting forward more affordable housing funds. He stated that cost is a negative as we are in a cycle of inflation in construction materials with significant costs in lumber and other materials. Hopefully, by the time we get funded, it will settle itself out, and prices will start to come down.

Mr. Juhl stated that he put together a housing survey on what is the need in Franklin and the senior community. He asked for feedback on where the survey could be distributed in addition to the Senior Center. He read aloud the five questions on the senior housing survey. Mr. Vericker asked what the purpose of the information is. Mr. Juhl stated that the survey adds to community outreach, and it also better supports what we are proposing in terms of the one- and two-bedroom mix. He stated that the survey will also give him a sense of the need out there. Mr. Vericker stated that if the goal is to move back to the proposed number of one- and two-bedroom units, he suggests the survey should ask if the respondent wanted the one- or two-bedroom unit based on the price. Mr. Juhl stated that he is not sure how to reach the senior community based on the specifics of the present time. He asked if the Senior Center had a lot of activity going on at this time. Ms. Pfeffer suggested Mr. Juhl arrange with Senior Center Director Erin Rogers to do a presentation at the Senior Center; she suggested the local churches may be able to pass along the questionnaire. Mr. Hellen agreed that Mr. Juhl should connect with Ms. Rogers regarding a presentation. Mr. Juhl stated that he is striving to get more feedback from the community. In response to Ms. Pfeffer's question, Mr. Juhl reviewed the pumping station and costs as part of the application and approval process. He stated that the State liked what the Town put together. It is a positive and allows him to apply for MassWorks funds. Ms. Pfeffer questioned that after this 60-unit building goes up, is there enough room to put in condos in cluster buildings. Mr. Juhl discussed that there is a six percent grade, but

some units with that type of housing could be developed. He stated that there are 8.5 acres left and most of that land is buildable. He stated that he is going to continue to work with the Town on the housing choice component. Ms. Kinhart asked when Mr. Juhl wants the \$30,000. Mr. Juhl said Ms. Kinhart needs to talk to Mr. Martin and Mr. Taberner.

Mr. Hellen stated that Representative Jake Auchincloss reached out to all town managers for suggestions for federal financing projects. Mr. Hellen stated that he put in a request for \$5.5 million; but, he made a note that this project was in the range of \$25 million to \$28 million. He stated that the EDC is asking the entire Town Council sign a letter advocating to Representative Auchincloss and state leaders. He asked Mr. Juhl to prepare a draft of a letter emphasizing the importance of this project to the Town and reminding the legislators that if they are really interested in building actual units now, this is a completely permitted project; this is the project to invest in whether it is state or federal funding. He stated that he is trying to pitch this as a unique shovel-ready project. He stated this project needs federal assistance. Mr. Juhl stated that he would put the letter together; every avenue to try to find additional funds is a way to move the project forward. Mr. Hellen stated that he wants everyone to be aware that the only part remaining for this project is funding.

Update on Housing Issues – Maxine Kinhart

Ms. Kinhart stated that the financials have not really changed. There was \$479,608 at last meeting. She deducted \$50,000 for the money for Mr. Juhl, but then they received \$40,000 in interest. So, the accounts are still where they were. Further, she noted that the money for Mr. Juhl was actually only \$30,000; therefore, she can add \$20,000 back. She stated that she attended the foreclosure sale for 5 Mark's Way on Friday. She stated that they asked her to speak about the deed rider. She stated that the house will not be lost from the inventory. Regarding the foreclosure sale, the end result was that the bank bought it back for \$245,529.72. The bank now owns the house with the deed rider intact. She provided an update on the affordable inventory. The house on Longobardi Drive closed in December 2020; it sold with the deed rider intact. The owners of 172 King Street house came to us and wanted to talk about selling; they liked the estimate DHCD provided (\$229,408). She has not heard back from them. We currently have a condo in Franklin Heights for sale; she believes they have a buyer, and they are just waiting for financing. She stated that they are now at 12 percent on the subsidized housing inventory. Ms. Pfeffer asked if the 2020 census information was received. Ms. Kinhart said the affordable housing number is still based on the 2010 census.

Ms. Pfeffer stated that the Housing Trust has been around for a long time, but it is the same four people who attend every meeting. There should be a resolution that if a member misses three consecutive meetings without a reason, the member should get off the committee. She stated that there are members who have not attended meetings in two years. She stated that there are four people in Franklin who would like to be involved in housing; the committee should utilize the people who would want to be here. Mr. Vericker stated that he agreed. There should be more formal rules and a yearly election of Chair and Vice Chair. Maybe they should set an every-other-month meeting schedule with the addition of other meetings as needed. He suggested the committee get things more formalized. He stated that he does not know the rules for this committee; this should be a topic for another meeting, and everyone should come with suggestions. Ms. Kinhart stated that when the Trust was formed, there was a bylaw with a section for the composition of the Trust; she will send that information to Mr. Vericker. Mr. Feeley asked which members have not been to meetings in a couple of years. Ms. Pfeffer stated Robert Keras. Mr. Feeley suggested that a committee member speak to Mr. Keras and suggest that if he is too busy, he should step down. Ms. Kinhart stated that during the committee membership renewal process, Mr. Keras indicated that he wanted to be on the Trust. Mr. Vericker stated that he would speak with Mr. Keras. Ms. Pfeffer

stated that they needed to have more meetings. Mr. Vericker reiterated setting a minimum meeting schedule and having other meetings as needed.

Ms. Bertone asked about the price of Longobardi Drive and Franklin Heights. Ms. Kinhart stated that Longobardi Drive was sold for \$233,050; it was a regular sale with a deed rider. She stated that Franklin Heights is under agreement for \$191,780; it is a garden style. She noted that there was a lot of back and forth for this sale.

Ms. Kinhart stated that she was contact by Mr. Larry Benedetto; he has some property on Washington Street next to the Amigo School that he wants to develop. She stated that he wants to build a multi-family or condos that are affordable without having subsidies and wants to make them available to municipal employees, first responders, and veterans. Trust members discussed the legality of a private entity making units only available to certain groups. Ms. Kinhart stated that Mr. Benedetto wanted the endorsement of the Trust. Mr. Vericker suggested the Town Attorney take a look at this. Ms. Kinhart stated that Mr. Benedetto indicated he would need a change in use. Mr. Taberner discussed the zoning of the property.

Next Meeting

Members discussed Zoom, in-person, and hybrid meetings. It was agreed the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, September 14, 2021, at 9:00 AM.

Ms. Kinhart confirmed that she would send copies of the Trust bylaw to the members.

General Business

Minutes: January 25, 2021

Motion to approve the January 25, 2021, meeting minutes by Feeley. Second by Pfeiffer. No discussion. Unanimous Vote: 6-0-0.

Motion to adjourn by Feeley. Second by Pfeiffer. No discussion. Unanimous Vote: 6-0-0.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:06 AM.

Minutes prepared by: Judith Lizardi

Minutes submitted by: Maxine Kinhart, Trustee