

Town of New Marlborough Housing Committee
Minutes of Committee Meeting Friday - January 10,2020

Acting chair Richard Long called the meeting to order at 9:10 at Town Hall.

- Committee Members Present: Teena Parton, Will Regan, Dan Doern, Richard Long, Richard Stebbins (by phone), Elizabeth Rosenberg arrived at 9:40
- Also present: Tara White and Neil Blackwell

Committee voted to approve participation of Richard Stebbins by phone

Election of Officers:

Positions were filled by unanimous vote as follows:

Elizabeth Rosenberg Chair (voted while in absentia, subsequently accepted)

Teena Parton vice chair

Will Regan Secretary

DLTA (Direct Local Technical Assistance) Grant Application:

Dan Doern previously prepared and presented the completed a DLTA grant application to the Committee for "Planning Ahead for Housing", which was previously presented to the Select Board, approved by that entity and submitted for consideration last week. The due date was today. DLTA is offered through the BRPC to provide technical assistance regarding housing, transport & other issues to municipal committees. The grant provides for a consultant (not funds) to come and work with the committee to assist with our education and with the creation of our plans. Dan mentioned that it is a very competitive field for this grant.

General Discussion of Needs / Goals / Objectives:

- WR - sees a large need for workforce housing... young employees who work for CMC Berkshires, Gedney, Old Inn, Southfield Store, Cantina, etc, but can't afford to live here and then must commute from communities as far as Pittsfield, Chatham or Torrington
- TP - sees the most need beign for senior housing and long term residents who can no longer afford to live here.
- DD noted that as our Town does not have 10% affordable housing units, any developer could choose to come in and develop housing without regard to our existing zoning.
- DD also felt we should consider how we get more housing that is affordable, regardless of State mandates.
- RS - pointed out that we are only talking about our (New Marlborough's) needs, but that at a Construct meeting he attended he learned that housing that is subsidized by the state via grant or tax relief must be opened to the entire state. He explained it as something along the lines of a lottery, where current NM residents receive 2 tickets and anyone else in the state, who may be intereted, gets one ticket. In other words we can't limit state assisted housing to NM residents. DD concurred with Stebbie's point that we don't control who gets them, and accordingly, should perhaps pursue two paths, one public and one private.

Town of New Marlborough Housing Committee
Minutes of Committee Meeting Friday - January 10, 2020

- Discussion was had about what kind of housing we'd be looking to build: cluster, attached, individual single family homes, individual multi family? WR & DD stated that multi family, attached and cluster homes were far more efficient to both build and manage and felt that publicly funded individual stand alone homes may not be possible. Teena feels that any form of attached or developed multi family project is not in the character of our community and should not be considered. TP felt she should live with repurposing an existing large home into multi family, but not a new development designed to fit in.
- RS suggested speaking with stockbridge and other towns about projects they've worked on
- RS asked who manages the project after it opens regarding collection of rent and managing occupancy and repairs. His recollection is that Construct is willing to take on management for a fee if there are 5 or more units. Generally agreed that it would be the responsibility of the developer or a management company.
- DD noted that subsidized developments have small profit margins, so must include more units.
- TP - feels strongly that we should not have more than 1 or 2 units in our homes.
- Cassilis Farm discussed as a candidate for being repurposed. ER planning to tour it with Construct, not necessarily as a project for this committee.
- It was pointed out that not only do higher numbers of units in a particular development create efficiencies in development that lower costs and efficiencies in management, they also create efficiencies that allow the operator to offer amenities to attract tenants such as a shuttle bus.
- General preference seemed to be that if we were to build a development with a larger number of units we would prefer to repurpose an old building or be in a new building designed to look like it's been here for a while than to build a modern looking multi family project (TP dissented on the idea of building to look old).
- TP- has information about a group that successfully raised funds to build a 3 bedroom house for one family.
- It's clear that we have many different avenues to pursue.
- ER - Becket deeded Construct a house they will renovate and sell at an affordable price with a deed restriction that it remains affordable forever.
- TP explained that Martha's vineyard assesses a 2% transfer tax on all real estate transactions to help solve their affordable housing crisis and utilize a lottery to allocate developed projects.
- We'd prefer to favor projects that can be directed to NM residents or workers and avoid the possibility of new random residents that may occur via the lottery effect
- Management is complicated, we don't want to do it
- Clear that our mandate is to explore: Current resident / low income, Senior housing, workforce housing

Town of New Marlborough Housing Committee
Minutes of Committee Meeting Friday - January 10, 2020

- Construct is also looking at getting homes donated that are set to be demolished. The donor gives the house and pays the prep and transport costs, all of which are a charitable donation. Construct then moves and improves the house.
- Another model was discussed where we would sell developed or purchased and improved homes at affordable prices with deed restrictions that keep them affordable in perpetuity.

Outreach to Other Towns:

Decision was made to contact neighboring town's committees to gather some intelligence and ask how they've looked at this issue. Assignments are as follow:

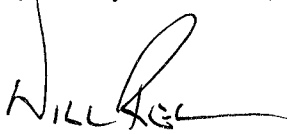
- Stebbie - Stockbridge
- Dan - GB
- RL - Egremont
- WR - Lee
- Teena - Island Housing Trust Martha's Vineyard

Scheduling future meetings:

Decided to wait for the technical advisor to proceed much further. Tentatively scheduled a meeting for Thu 1/30 9am

Meeting adjourned 10:34am

Respectfully Submitted,



Will Regan, Secretary

Date: 1-30-2020