

Carlisle Housing Authority
Meeting Minutes
September 29, 2014

Present: Alan Lehotsky, Chair; Mark Levitan; Steven Pearlman; Carolyn Ing; Elizabeth DeMille Barnett, Housing Coordinator. **Absent:** W. Randall Brown.

1. Meeting called to order at 7:34 p.m.

2. Old Business

A. NOAH Benfield Farms

- a. **Tenant water quality concerns.** Ms. Barnett reported that tenants of the building had expressed concerns about the water aesthetic quality to members of the Council on Aging, and one call was also placed to the Town Administrator. Concerns were in reference to odor and taste. According to NOAH, the water has been tested and meets all Massachusetts Department of Environmental Policy (MassDEP) water quality standards. The problem may be attributable to the water softening agent. NOAH has said that the problem will be addressed until it is rectified.

Mr. Lehotsky wondered whether such complaints are reaching the property management staff.

- b. **Project development update.** Mr. Lehotsky reported that the rent has been reduced on the two remaining 2-bedroom units. It has been difficult finding renters that are income-eligible for these 60% Area Median Income (AMI) units. A third unit was close to being leased, but it was determined that the applicant was earning too much to qualify for the income guidelines.

A discussion ensued about the possibility of lowering the age restriction from age 62 to age 55. Mr. Levitan asked if there were legal impediments to this. Mr. Lehotsky said that it may be a question for the Zoning Board of Appeals. After discussion of the topic, the board's consensus was developed in favor of supporting NOAH in its application for this change.

Mr. Pearlman moved that the CHA is amenable to allowing NOAH to lower the age of residency eligibility for Benfield Farms to age 55. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ing. All present aye, the motion passed.

B. 338 Bedford Road Intellectually-disabled group homes

- a. **Request for proposal (RFP) for group homes for the intellectually-disabled.** Mr. Lehotsky reported that changes to the RFP document have been made after review by the state and Town Counsel; most changes were made either to clarify legal language or to reflect consistency in descriptions, such as for units and acreage.

- b. **New Department of Developmental Services (DDS) policy restricting number of units in group homes.** Mr. Lehotsky announced the recently announced DDS policy guidelines change (September 2014) which limits the number of bedrooms in a duplex to eight, with no more than four bedrooms per duplex unit/side. This new policy would

prevent the Housing Authority from entering into a ground lease agreement with a developer to build the nine bedroom duplex that had been planned for. Nine units are important, because this is the minimum number of units needed to be added to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) in order for the Town to be eligible for one year of "safe harbor" from Chapter 40B development which is not consistent with local needs.

In response to this policy change, a letter from Mr. Lehotsky and Vanessa Moroney, Chair of Carlisle Affordable Housing Trust (CAHT), was sent to DDS requesting an exception to this policy. The letter provided documentation that this project has been planned for several years with full DDS collaboration, and that a reduction of the number of units would have legal ramifications with respect to the ground lease from CAHT to CHA, which requires that nine bedrooms/units must be built, as well as the aforementioned Town's goal to meet its Housing Production Plan Chapter 40B target.

c. **New CPA grant agreement procedures.** Mr. Lehotsky discussed the issue of new Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds grant agreement procedures that have implications for the release of the Request for Proposal (RFP) to enter into a ground lease agreement for the development of the 338 Bedford Road property. Two CPA grants to CAHT were authorized by 2014 Town Meeting. The CHA will need to formally request funding from CAHT prior to issuing the RFP, to cover procurement expenses and CHA-related project costs.

d. **Public comment regarding RFP.** Mr. Lehotsky initiated a discussion about soliciting public comment on the RFP during the CHA meeting on October 14, 2014. He suggested that a slide deck be prepared to review highlights of the project, and that the *Carlisle Mosquito* be alerted. Ms. Barnett offered to provide images and material to Mr. Lehotsky and to assist with preparation.

C. Long Ridge Road Chapter 40B update.

a. Mr. Lehotsky updated the board on additional ZBA hearings that have taken place, as well as on the initial meeting of the Town Hall Advisory Group.

D. Commonwealth of Mass. Community Innovation Challenge Grant.

a. Ms. Barnett updated the board about the progress of this state Administration and Finance grant application which seeks funding to hire a consultant to develop a "Resource Guide on Septic System, Community Water Supply and Private Well Development" for mixed-income, multi-unit and single family home development. She reported that the towns of Boxborough, Dunstable, Easton and Medway had signed on to the project. A letter in support of the project from the Carlisle Board of Health has been received. Ms. Barnett would manage the project.

Mr. Pearlman moved that the CHA wholeheartedly endorse the Community Innovation Challenge Grant application for development of a "Resource Guide on Septic System, Community Water Supply and Private Well Development". The motion was seconded by Mr. Levitan. All present aye, the motion passed.

E. DHCD small project approval precedents.

a. Mr. Lehotsky related that in previous meetings, Mr. Brown has asked if it is possible to determine what, if any, unit count or project size thresholds DHCD employs when evaluating affordable housing projects. A discussion ensued about possible sources of information that would provide insight into this.

3. New Business - (none)

4. Approval of Minutes. Minutes of the August 18, 2014 meeting were reviewed and discussed. A motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Ms. Ing, seconded by Mr. Lehotsky; all present aye, the motion passed. Minutes of the September 17, 2014 meeting were reviewed and discussed. A motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Ms. Ing, seconded by Mr. Pearlman; all present, the motion passed.

5. Next Meeting Dates: Tuesday, October 14th (October 13th is a holiday); Monday, October 27th.

6. Meeting Adjourned at 8:30 p.m. Motion by Mr. Pearlman, second by Ms. Ing; the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Levitan, Secretary