

## **NORTHAMPTON HOUSING PARTNERSHIP**

Minutes

September 12, 2016

**Members Present:** Gordon Shaw, Chair; Jim Reis, Greta Hagen, Michael Roy, Mark Goggins, Rev. Todd Weir and Ali Brauner (appointment pending). Also present, Laura Baker, Valley CDC and Peg Keller, staff.

### **Guest Presentation - Laura Baker, Valley CDC**

Laura Baker, Real Estate Project Manager for Valley CDC presented a project proposal they are working on. She said she is not here with a formal request, but wanted to inform the Partnership of their plans. Valley has owned a 15 room Single Room Occupancy building at 82 Bridge Street since 1990. They are proposing a complete renovation of the existing building and new construction of an addition which would add 13-17 new units. Highlights of her presentation included:

- The building is historic, dating back to 1820. It also served as the original Jessie's House homeless shelter in the 1980's.
- Since Valley's purchase, the building has not received any major rehabilitation. Some of the rooms are very small, and the kitchen and bathrooms are shared.
- The rehab plan will convert the existing units to enhanced SRO's with private kitchens and baths.
- The project addresses stated goals in the Housing Needs Assessment and Strategic Housing plan by increasing units for singles and residents with special needs.
- The surrounding neighborhood can accommodate the increased density. Shaw's Motel had 21 units, now gone.

Chair Shaw asked about the current rent structure. She said the range is \$400-700 per month. Mr. Reis asked about the total project cost. She responded that it breaks down to \$200,000 per unit with a total project cost of approximately 5 million dollars. They are proposing mixed incomes for the tenant composition. There are 7 market rate units there now and 8 project based Section 8 subsidies. Mr. Reis asked about on-site management. She said there is none now, but this scale of redevelopment will permit creation of an office on site for part time management and provision of support services. Their plan is to apply to the Community Preservation Committee for funding in the first round of 2017.

Mr. Roy asked about capital reserves for ongoing maintenance. She said the property has been refinanced in the past and funders require that capital reserve accounts are set

up. Currently, the \$325 per unit set aside is inadequate. With this new undertaking, that amount will be increased.

Members agreed that it was a little early to produce a letter of support for the CPC, so Ms. Baker will come back either in December or January and report on additional details as they become fleshed out. The Bridge Street SRO project will go in to DHCD in 2018 after the zoning permits and design work have been completed. She reported that Valley's other Northampton project, the LumberYard Project is dependent on the current MassWorks application now pending at the State. There may be another One Stop application next spring for that development.

Ms. Baker was thanked for her attendance. Peg expressed enthusiasm for the project which not only improves the quality of the existing units, but introduces additional SRO units to the inventory in a prime downtown location. Peg told Partnership members they would also need to weigh in when Valley requests CDBG funding for the project as well.

### **Minutes**

Mr. Reis made a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting, seconded by Rev. Weir. The vote in favor was unanimous by those in attendance in July.

### **Action Plan Tasks**

Chair Shaw said the tasks that can be accomplished by the Housing Partnership are due in large part to the commitment of the members. There is a higher degree of success when members identify a few tasks that can actually be completed. Mr. Reis circulated an outline he created depicting his thoughts on the current Action Plan. His essential points were:

- 1.) Separate Partnership responsibilities from staff responsibilities
- 2.) Develop more specifics to the goal statements and assign responsibility
- 3.) Explore the formation of Committees after goals are established.

Peg reported that in a meeting she had with Chair Shaw, they identified Community Education (op-eds, workshops); Fair Housing, Zoning and CPC project renewal (Community Housing Support Services Project) & creation of new projects as the primary areas on which to focus in the upcoming year. It was agreed that Peg would flesh out each of these areas with specifics for presentation to members at the October meeting. Rev. Weir offered to write 2 op-ed pieces. Ms. Hagen asked that the

Community Housing Support Services Project information be sent, as well as the Impediments to Fair Housing Analysis.

**Misc. Updates**

CPC Allocations

To follow up on a request from last month, Peg reported on the overall breakdown of CPC funding allocations per category over the entire program. Sarah LaValley provided the following:

Historic Preservation	\$3,868,759	24%
Affordable Housing	\$2,808,296	17.40%
Open Space	\$4,845,345	30%
<u>Recreation</u>	<u>\$4,606,164</u>	<u>28.6%</u>
Total	\$16,128,564	100%

The notation was made that the Committee has approved every housing request that has come before them. Therefore, the funding imbalance is due to not having more projects proposed.

Tax Relief Incentives for Creation of Affordable Housing

Mr. Reis asked about the Provincetown Tax Abatement program and if that was something we were no longer pursuing. Mr. Roy said there could be additional discussion and Peg said it should be added as a goal. The Amherst model will also be observed as the Beacon Communities project in N. Amherst moves forward.

Northampton Nursing Home Zoning

Peg reported on a meeting she had with Councilor Murphy/ realtor and Carolyn Misch (OPD) about the current zoning of the Northampton Nursing Home. He had come to an earlier NHP meeting positing that the current zoning was a barrier to reusing the property. After further discussion, it was determined that if and when an end user was identified, the zoning could be revised then. The two possible paths are changing the district from URB to URC to permit multi-family zoning, or to a designation that would allow office/industrial. Currently, skilled nursing, assisted living, treatment facility uses are allowed. Mr. Murphy said he would check with his agent to see if outreach had recently been done to companies that operate those types of businesses. To change the zoning in one direction or another at this juncture, could limit the pool of potential purchasers.

### Fair Housing Work

A Housing Partnership application to the Community Preservation Committee for funding a Fair Housing Plan update was discussed. Peg will delineate the tasks involved in putting forward a submission to the CPC in the first round of 2017. She will re-circulate the newly adopted Federal Fair Housing legislation that John Fisher of HAP presented to us last year.

Mr. Roy asked for an update on the Northampton Refugee Resettlement Effort. Peg noted that she is on the Steering Committee and the Housing Work Group. Mr. Roy said he thought that is something the Housing Partnership should be involved in. Peg noted there will be an informational session to identify housing opportunities that the Partnership members could attend. Locating housing placements will be difficult, so any thoughts or participation is welcome (by Peg and the Steering Committee). (DATE has now been set for October 24th at 7:00 p.m.)

Mr. Roy said he thinks more information needs to be disseminated to the public about the availability of homes for sale in Northampton for under \$200,000. Peg responded that this would be a great op-ed topic to dispel the myth that Northampton is completely unaffordable.

**Adjourn/** There being no further business to discuss, the meeting concluded at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Peg Keller

## MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 12, 2016

Follow Up Tasks	Person Responsible	Completed
Send Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing	Peg NHP members to read	9/16/2016 <b>9/26 - done</b>
Send CPC application for CHSSProject/ Annual Reports	Peg NHP members to read	9/16/2106 <b>9/26 - done</b>
Work on Elaboration of Action Plan Tasks/ objectives	Peg NHP members review for 10/3/16 meeting	9/30/2016
Determine 1st Op Ed Topic	NHP Members Rev. Weir	
Circulate Agora Report/ Zoning Barriers	Peg NHP members to read	9/16/2106 <b>9/26 - done</b>
Attend Housing Rehab Program Launch	Peg NHP Members (optional)	September 21, 2016 ✓ 6:30 p.m. Hearing Room
Attend Housing Session/ Refugee Resettlement Effort	Peg NHP Members (optional)	October 24, 2016 7:00 p.m. Hearing Room
Monitor Ptown and Amherst Tax Abatement Programs	Michael Roy	