

Newburyport Affordable Housing Trust  
Meeting Minutes

<u>Meeting Date:</u>	Thursday, February 5, 2015
<u>Meeting Location:</u>	Mayor's Conference Room, City Hall
<u>Members in Attendance:</u>	Judy Tymon, Susanne Cameron, Madeline Nash, Karen Wiener
<u>Members Absent:</u>	Mayor Holaday
<u>Staff Present:</u>	Andy Port, Director of Planning, Kate Newhall-Smith, Planner
<u>Minutes Taker:</u>	Kate Newhall-Smith

Tymon called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes**

The draft minutes from the November 6<sup>th</sup> were voted on as follows: Nash made a motion to approve, seconded by Wiener, all in favor (voting members were Tymon, Nash and Wiener).

Due to the absent members, the draft minutes from the January 14<sup>th</sup> meeting were not able to be voted on. They will be added to the March meeting agenda.

**Discussion: Consultant Selection**

Smith obtained three proposals for 40R consultants: Lynne Sweet of LDS Consulting Group; Charleen Regan; and Wendy Cohen of New Seasons Development.

Nash spoke with Mike Jacobs but he is not available for the next six weeks. He may be a good option for the future since he has experience in 40R development and has direct experience in working with Minco.

Port updates the Trust on his meeting with Minco where they were adamant that they will not hand over a pro forma. He suggested approaching Minco with the notion of a subsidy and needing a consultant review of a pro forma to see if a subsidy would be helpful. He also stated that Mr. Minnicucci spoke to the level of affordability and if he would have to provide more than 25% of the units as affordable, why wouldn't he propose a 40B.

Nash states that pro formas are fluid and change as phases of the project progresses. Wiener states that numbers can be tweaked and adjusted to reflect what a developer wants to reflect.

Tymon asks about moving forward with a consultant. Port suggests getting feedback on how to push the limits of affordability, which could include a review of that part of the regulation as well as the consultant's own experience in dealing with development and affordability in a 40R. The Trust could use the consultant's professional assumptions to advocate for more affordability in these projects.

Nash asks if hiring a consultant will help with the current Minco project; based on the anticipated timeline, it may not work. There will be other parcels and the need to hire someone for analysis and help with strategies.

Tymon states that the Trust may want to hire outside expertise to help negotiate for more affordability in future 40R projects.

Nash not sure that the three proposals represent the exact right fit to help the Trust with the current project. In addition to the technical skills, which all three respondents possess, the consultant needs negotiating skills as well.

Port reiterates that the March 4<sup>th</sup> public hearing is not the absolute deadline for revisions to the ordinance. Adjustments may be made after that hearing closing, but any changes to the regulations after they have been submitted to the state will need to be approved by the state before being officially incorporated.

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**Discussion: Draft 40R Regulations**

The City Council's Planning & Development Committee will be opening a joint public hearing with the Planning Board on March 4, 2015. There will be a second public hearing after the City receives the State review later in the year.

Nash is pleased that the affordability was increased to 25% of the units; however she did not see language regarding the requirement for them to be rented at 80% AMI. She did see reference to "Income Eligible Household". Port responds that the definition of "Income Eligible Household" has 80% AMI in it. Nash would prefer to see the regulation incorporate a portion of the required affordable units be at a lower affordability than 80%. She is curious to find the cost to developers to provide a rental unit at 50% AMI over a set amount of years.

Cameron reiterates the Trust's needs at varying levels of affordability. She would like to keep the regulation stating that 25% of the units must be affordable, but negotiate with Minco so that some of the units are offered at 60%, 80% and 100% AMI. Tymon states that there will likely be no negotiation with Minco for this particular project and if the varying levels of affordability is what the Trust wants to see, then it would need to be included in the regulation.

Wiener prefers to keep the regulation more simple and try to work with developers on future parcels.

Nash asks if there has been public comment about the regulations. Port responds that the public seems to be most concerned with the density and potential build out of the whole district. There is a chance that the size of the district may be adjusted to reduce the potential numbers of housing units.

Wiener asks about what the Council may be supportive of in terms of affordability. Port believes that they will be more concerned with density and will defer to the experts on the affordability piece.

Nash reiterates that the high density and the low parking requirements is a very good deal for Minco.

Cameron asks about Minco fixing sidewalks, etc. Port responds that Minco will be fixing the sidewalks that lead to the property and those that connect it to others. He mentions the idea of mitigation fees and the need to find a nexus between the fee and the project so that it is legally defensible. This is a portion of the regulation that is still in the discussion phase.

**Discussion: Draft CPA Application**

Smith incorporated Nash's comments into the draft.

There was discussion as to how to convey to the CPC what the Trust would like to use the funding for.

Cameron wants to make sure that the word choices reflect that the funding will be used to support housing for young families and seniors and that they aren't just housing "units", which sounds cold.

Smith will make the edits as discussed and send the draft around for a final comment.

**Discussion: Down Zoning in Back Bay**

The City Council's Planning & Development Committee will be opening a joint public hearing with the Planning Board on March 4, 2015 to discuss the recent proposal to expand the downzoning in the Back Bay neighborhood.

Port reviews David Hall's project, which would be affected if the zoning change is adopted.

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Tymon discusses the zoning change and the timing of it as compared to the 40R timing.

Smith asks if the Trust would like to write a letter in support of the project. Tymon suggests each member write their own letters to the Council about the down zoning, or attend the hearing and speak in support of David's project.

### **Updates: Housing Resales**

The deadline for the Heritage Landing application is February 19<sup>th</sup> with the lottery scheduled for March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Updates: Fund Balance**

No discussion on the balance.

**Next Meeting:** The Trust is scheduled to meet Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

Wiener makes a motion to adjourn, seconded by Tymon, all in favor. Meeting is adjourned at 8 p.m.