Affordable Housing Committee **Minutes** **July 23, 2013**
Town Hall **7:00 pm**

Present
Bilal Ansari, Charles Bonenti, Van Ellet, Cheryl Shanks, Catherine Yamamoto (chair);
Absent: Leigh Short

Also present: Joan Burns, Vivian Jaffe, Suzanne Kemple

Stephen Dravis (iBerkshires), Alex Elvin (Advocate), Martin Filion (Willinet)

Business

1. Minutes

The minutes of the July 8 meeting were approved 4-0-1. The minutes of the July 9 meeting were approved 4-0-1. Bilal moved, Cathy seconded.

2. Action to Engage Consultant

Cheryl sent the finalized RFP out earlier today. It will be posted on the committee's web site. The due date was adjusted to August 12.

3. Sites

A. 59 Water St

Once we have the consultant, we will schedule a neighborhood meeting, which we hope to have at the Fire House.

B. PhoTech

Once we have the consultant, we will schedule a neighborhood meeting, which we might have at Kevin Kennefick's house or at another nearby site.

C. Cable Mills

1. Cable Mills South: what is that?

A possible phase II part of the project, the parking lot and land adjacent to it at the southern end of the property, not included in the current plans.

2. How much Town money does Traggorth have?

From the town, $1.5 million, we think.

3. Is he in the same queue we are for money?

a. We are not in a queue.

b. We should discover what sort of funding CMs is applying for, when they are next applying, what income level the affordable units are pegged at (60%? 80%?), and what results they anticipate.

Suzanne Kemple discussed the funding cycles and the process by which funds are awarded.

D. Proprietors Fields

Two expansions, one with an $80,000 subsidy from town, another into college property. Lack of section 202 funding has held things up. Because the college is a private entity and so is Higher Ground, the negotiations do not go through or involve us or the Trust, though if affordable housing is built there, it will add to the town's official inventory of subsidized housing (SHI).

E. Any other town-owned properties?

No. Ann McCallum reviewed the list of town-owned parcels on behalf of the Spruces Roof Group and came to the same conclusion that we did: Burbank and Lowry are the only possible sites.

F. Lowry and Burbank?

1. ConCom has received adjusted language from the Selectmen.

2. Burbank section to be determined.

G. Sweet Farm subdivision

One site available for affordable housing; not buildable.

H. Spruces

1. Continuing controversy about legalities and practicalities of re-building housing in this flood plain. Bilal will ask Tim Geller, of Southern Berkshire Housing Development in Great Barrington, to speak with us about his experience building housing in flood plains, next meeting.

2. Peter Fohlin prepared and presented a timeline for the Hazard Mitigation Grant's implementation.

3. Earlier today, Spruces residents met with Higher Ground and were told that it is unlikely that new housing will be completed before residents need to move out of the Spruces, so they should probably seek interim housing.

I. Privately owned sites

1. Pines Lodge Annex: adjacent land?

2. Wylde property: former dump site

3. The AH Trust went into executive session at its last meeting to discuss the purchase of private property.

4. Planning/Information/Due Diligence for Lowry & Burbank

The committee discussed whether it needed to gather more information on the Lowry and Burbank properties, and if so, what information that should be and whom we might engage to gather/create it.

A. Identifying a portion of land

1. Was already done for Lowry--the approximately 10 acre site Guntlow identified.

2. Was not already done for Burbank: someone needs to identify 10 to 30 acres of Burbank that would be suitable for building; those acres might be continguous or scattered.

Public maps describing soils, wetland areas, topography and property lines could be taken into account by an engineer who would then walk the site and determine the best portions.

B. Conceptual site plans

1. Perhaps there should be more/various schemes drawn for Lowry, as having a single sketch has led some to believe that this is The Plan.

2. Perhaps there should be some done for Burbank--again, more than one so as not to mislead people into thinking that anything specific has been chosen.

3. Conceptual plans reflect what is possible from a technical point of view but not what is financially feasible. To the extent that conceptual plans disregard economic reality, they can be useful (to help imagine possibilities and encourage creativity) but also cause misunderstandings (leading viewers to believe they are financially realistic or likely).

C. Guntlow has indicated a willingness to walk the properties and draw multiple conceptual plans for Burbank and Lowry at a cost under the dollar threshold for an RFP.

D. We ought to go to ConCom and offer to engage a firm to do a site evaluation for Burbank. Cheryl moved, Charles seconded, 5-0-0.

5. Chart

The chart Cheryl drew is undetailed. It would be useful to elaborate on the steps involved between points indicated on the map. It would be useful to indicate where other entities come in to play, e.g. where the Trust becomes involved, or where the ConComm might ask the AHC to do something.

No documents consulted.

Next meeting: August 13