

## **MINUTES**

Walpole Housing Partnership Committee

May 4, 2021 – 7:30 P.M.

Via Zoom

Members present: Andrew Flowers, Audrey Grace, Willa Bandler, Ben Barrett, Kurt Tommy

Others present: Patrick Deschenes

### **1. Meeting called to order at 7:40pm.**

### **2. Patrick Deschenes, Community and Economic Development Director for Walpole**

Patrick is pleased to report that Walpole received the Housing Choice designation from the state. We are now eligible to apply for a Housing Choice Capital Grant, which provides up to \$250,000 for infrastructure improvements to accommodate new housing production.

Patrick has talked with DPW staff and they've identified the Burns Ave 40B as a place to make infrastructure improvements. That project is for 32 units and it's currently under appeal. The grant application would ask for \$150,000 to \$170,000 to make sidewalks on Union Street. It would cover about 1,200 feet, and the intended purpose is to improve pedestrian safety given the expected new growth. Patrick will apply via One Stop Capital Growth (a portal for applying for multiple grants from the state).

Willa: Can we also fund a bus shelter through this grant? Patrick will look into whether the MBTA can fund it, but if not, the Housing Choice Capital Grant could be an option.

### **3. Emergency Rental Assistance Programs**

Patrick has received one in-bound call, from a realtor, of someone asking for information about the emergency rental assistance program offered through SMOC.

### **4. Joint committee on inclusionary zoning with Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals**

Willa, Andrew, and Kurt are the WHP's representatives and the first meeting of the joint committee is May 11, 2021.

Ben: The special permit granting authority should remain with the ZBA, not moved to the Planning Board's authority.

Audrey: The planning board has been our biggest barrier to implementing the recommendations in the housing production plan. There should be careful consideration about raising the threshold

for the minimum number of units that triggers the IZB. That original decision was made based on data.

Kurt: What matters is not what we want, but what we can get through Town Meeting. Our goals must be realistic and achievable.

## **5. Approval of Minutes**

A motion to approve the March 2, 2021 meeting minutes was made by Audrey and seconded by Willa.

- UNANIMOUS 5-0-0.

## **6. Committee membership recruitment**

One challenge we have is that there are no renters represented on our committee. Andrew and Willa will work on renter recruitment, beginning in June.

Andrew will recommend to the Select Board that the size of the WHP be reduced from the nine members to seven or five.

## **7. Old Business**

IZB will have a modest impact on affordable housing. Our committee should think about 40R and LIP as two options to have a greater impact. Audrey will research and provide recommendations at our next meeting.

## **8. New business**

Andrew was voted as the WHP's tentative representative to the Master Plan Steering Committee, should that committee have WHP representation. Motion by Andrew, seconded by Ben.  
UNANIMOUS 5-0-0.

The ZBA issued a final decision on the Summer St 40B project. Because the Town has a DHCD-approved Housing Production Plan, thanks to this committee's work, we will have a two-year safe harbor.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 8.

## **9. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25pm.**

Andrew motion, Ben seconded. UNANIMOUS 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted by:

Andrew Flowers

Minutes approved on: 6/8/21

Chairperson's Signature:

*Andrew W. Flowers*