

MINUTES

Boxborough Housing Board

Thursday, August 13, 2015

7:30 PM

Morse-Hilberg Room, Town Hall, 29 Middle Road

Housing Board Members Present: Al Murphy, Chair, Michael Fetterman, Diane Friedman,
Ron Vogel

Others Present: Adam Duchesneau, Town Planner

The meeting was called to order at 7:37 PM.

I. Information Items

A. Stow Road RFP

Mr. Murphy informed the Housing Board that he and Selectman Les Fox were continuing to work on and make edits to the project's Request for Proposals (RFP). When they feel it is near completion, their plan is to send the document to Susan Connelly at the Massachusetts Housing Partnership for her review.

II. Minutes

A. Minutes from July 9, 2015

The meeting minutes from July 9, 2015 were approved on a MOTION by Mr. Vogel and SECONDED by Ms. Friedman, with all members voting in favor. Mr. Fetterman was absent from the vote.

III. Old Business

A. Community Preservation Act (CPA)

Mr. Vogel went over the 2015-2016 Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Timeline noting that Step 1 Applications were due on September 24, 2015. He added that the Step 1 Applications are very short and are only required to determine if a project idea is eligible for CPA funding. Mr. Vogel also noted that Complete Applications for the CPC are due by October 29, 2015.

Mr. Murphy indicated that Channing Wagg is working on the details of a rental housing voucher program to be funded by CPA funds for an entire year. The idea is that a voucher would cover the cost difference between a household's rent and 30% of the household's yearly income. Mr. Murphy noted there are federal and state programs which already do this, but there is a substantial waiting list. Mr. Murphy indicated it still needed to be confirmed if the voucher program could be implemented to assist only current Boxborough residents. He continued on to state the details of the program, such as who is eligible, how the funds would be administered, etc., still needed to be fleshed out. Ms. Friedman asked if this program would be similar to the Section 8 voucher program and Mr. Murphy indicated it would probably be very similar. Mr. Murphy proposed that he and Mr. Wagg continue to work on creating a rough framework for the program and then the Housing Board and others could review the details before it was submitted to the CPC for CPA funding.

Ms. Friedman asked how much money could potentially be funneled into the program. Mr. Vogel stated there was about \$18,000 in the CPA Fund that was reserved exclusively for expenditures on community housing purposes and there were additional funds in the general CPA Fund which could also be potentially accessed. Mr. Duchesneau noted that once the FY 15 funds that were collected were approved by the state, the amount available exclusively for community housing purposes would grow to around \$36,000. Ms. Friedman stated she believed that both Acton and Concord might have Town funded rental voucher programs already in place.

Mr. Murphy added that he assumed paying for the Regional Housing Services contract would be another item the Housing Board would apply to have funded using CPA funds. The other Housing Board members agreed.

There was then discussion about obtaining CPA funds for use by Habitat for Humanity to construct a home in Boxborough. However, Mr. Murphy pointed out that Habitat for Humanity primarily needs land in a community as opposed to funding. He wondered if any CPA funds would even be necessary for Habitat for Humanity projects. Mr. Duchesneau indicated he could look into this matter further by contacting Habitat for Humanity directly.

The Housing Board then discussed the possibility of implementing a down payment assistance program using CPA funds. Mr. Murphy indicated this type of a program would provide down payment assistance to home buyers of affordable dwelling units. After some conversation, the Board did not feel this would be a very lucrative program because the affordable homeownership units in town did not turnover that often and the Board also felt the resources that would be used for this program could be better allocated elsewhere.

Mr. Vogel asked if any CPA funds could be used toward the Stow Road property. Mr. Murphy indicated this was possible and the goal is to ultimately get back the \$900,000 that the Affordable Housing Trust spent to acquire the property. However, the Affordable Housing Trust is also looking at ways of reducing the re-sale price of the property if certain affordability trade-offs could be accommodated by the developer. Ms. Friedman felt that additional outreach regarding this project would be useful.

Mr. Murphy then indicated that he and Mr. Wagg would move forward in developing a framework for the rental voucher program.

At this time Mr. Fetterman arrived at the meeting.

Mr. Fetterman asked how long an ongoing rental voucher program could be maintained. Mr. Murphy indicated he felt it would be for a finite amount of time, but that is still to be determined. There was then additional conversation about households who wanted to move to Boxborough and if they would be eligible for the rental voucher program prior to moving into town.

IV. New Business

A. Update on Boxborough2030 (Master Plan)

Mr. Murphy indicated the Master Plan Update Committee (MPUC) and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) had put together a Recommendations & Implementation Plan for Boxborough2030. He noted the people which need to buy into these items are the relative operative boards for each action item laid out in the Recommendations & Implementation Plan. Mr. Duchesneau stated that an updated Recommendations & Implementation Plan would be sent out by August 18, 2015 and the Housing Board should then focus on reviewing and commenting on the relevant housing items in this document. Mr. Murphy and Mr. Duchesneau indicated they would work together to tease out the housing related items from the updated Recommendations & Implementation Plan when it was released so the Housing Board could focus on reviewing those particular items at their next meeting in September.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 PM on a MOTION by Mr. Vogel and SECONDED by Mr. Fetterman, with all members voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Adam Duchesneau.