

Boxborough Housing Board
Thursday, April 14, 2016, 8:00 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 8:04 PM.

I. Information Items

Mr. Murphy noted the Town Hall handicap accessible lift had been replaced and the Housing Board will return to having their meetings in Town Hall moving forward.

II. Minutes

A. Minutes from March 10, 2016

The meeting minutes from March 10, 2016 were approved on a MOTION by Mr. Fetterman and SECONDED by Mr. Vogel, with all members voting in favor.

III. Old Business

A. Housing Board Items at Town Meeting

Mr. Murphy indicated he would like to take a formal vote on each of the Town Meeting Warrant Article items which the Housing Board is supporting.

1. CPA Funding for Regional Housing Services

Mr. Murphy briefly discussed the slides for the presentation which would be made at Town Meeting regarding the Regional Housing Services funding request. Mr. Fetterman suggested that wherever the reasoning could be indicated for which items were required and by whom, that would be helpful. Mr. Murphy stated he would insert text noting which items were required by the Department of Housing and Community Development. There were also suggestions made regarding the wording on the Activities and Funding slide.

Mr. Fetterman MADE a MOTION to recommend Articles 8A and 8B be adopted by Town Meeting. Mr. Vogel SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor.

2. CPA Funding for the Rental Voucher Program

Mr. Murphy briefly discussed the slides for the presentation which would be made at Town Meeting regarding the Rental Voucher Program funding request. Mr. Fetterman felt it was important to make it very clear the number of households which would be receiving assistance from the program. Mr. Murphy agreed and indicated he would make it clearer that six households would receive rental payment assistance as part of this program. Mr. Fetterman felt it should be pointed out to Town Meeting that the required 10% CPA Community Housing allocation was greater than the total combined amount for the Rental Voucher Program and Regional Housing Services funding requests. Mr. Murphy indicated he would add a reference regarding the administrative costs and he would review the Extremely Low Income heading in each of the tables to ensure consistency.

Mr. Vogel MADE a MOTION to recommend Article 8C be adopted by Town Meeting. Mr. Fetterman SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor.

There was then discussion regarding which slides should include the phrase “A Rural Engaged Community For All”, which is the tag line for Boxborough2030, the Town’s Master Plan. It was determined the phrase would be included on the first and last slides of the Rental Voucher Program presentation.

3. Funding for Soil Absorption Testing at 405 Middle Road

Mr. Fetterman MADE a MOTION to recommend Article 12 be adopted by Town Meeting. Mr. Vogel SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor.

The Housing Board then took a five-minute recess.

B. CPA Rental Voucher Program

There was discussion regarding the issue of ties when calculating scores for program applicants. Mr. Murphy felt that people within two points of one another should be deemed to have a "tie" score. However, he also noted ties would only be considered when relevant to a household being selected or not selected for inclusion into the program. Mr. Murphy recommended that in these instances, a lottery would be used to determine who was selected for the program. Mr. Vogel asked why applicants should be considered to have a tie score if they are two points apart. Mr. Murphy stated this was because of the rounding factor which may skew the scoring just enough and declaring a tie for scores within two points of one another would eliminate this factor. Mr. Fetterman noted the data being submitted by applicants is not that precise. Mr. Vogel indicated he was not supportive of declaring ties in such a manner. He felt the scoring system should be used and the top six applicants should be granted inclusion into the program.

There was then discussion regarding tweaks to the selection criteria table. There was also conversation regarding landlord involvement in the program and some of the potential drawbacks of requiring landlords to agree to participate in the program. It was ultimately determined to leave the landlord involvement as it was currently proposed, but it could be reevaluated before Year 2 of the program began.

C. Stow Road

Mr. Murphy indicated that he and Selectman Les Fox had met with attorney Dan Hill and developer Mark O'Hagan to discuss the Request for Proposals (RFP) in its current state. Mr. O'Hagan stated he would not respond to the RFP as it was currently written because it was too complex. Mr. Hill and Mr. O'Hagan recommended making the criteria of the RFP much more defined. Mr. Murphy noted some communities have obtained some type of general Comprehensive Permit which gives developers flexibility for these specific type of projects. Mr. Fetterman asked if this would be attractive to a developer. Mr. Murphy stated it would be, as having the permit already in hand was a good thing. He also added it would be interesting to see what examples of "general" Comprehensive Permits could be uncovered.

IV. New Business

Mr. Murphy noted that for those Housing Board members who might be interested, the Massachusetts Housing Partnership would be holding a Housing Institute Conference at Devens on June 14th and 15th.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM on a MOTION by Mr. Vogel and SECONDED by Mr. Fetterman, with all members voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Adam Duchesneau.