

Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board
Approved Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2020

A meeting of the Salem Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board was held on Tuesday, March 3, 2020 in the Great Room at the Community Life Center, 401 Bridge Street, Salem, Massachusetts at 6:00 p.m.

Members present: Mayor Kim Driscoll, Councilor Christine Madore, Cynthia Nina-Soto, Rebecca Curran, Ben Anderson, Mickey Northcutt, John Boris.

Mayor Driscoll called the meeting to order at 6:26 p.m.

1. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Inclusionary Zoning Update

Amanda Chiancola informs the Board that the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance was routed to the City Solicitor, Zoning Enforcement Officer and Chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals with a request for comments. The Zoning Enforcement Officer and ZBA Chair did not have comments. The City Solicitor had a few minor comments and edits were made in response to those comments. The ordinance was filed with the City Council.

B. Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance Update

Ms. Chiancola informs the Board that the ADU Ordinance has been filed with the City Council. She also informs the Board that the Community Preservation Commission determine that the loan program is eligible for CPA funding. However, Ms. Chiancola recommends seeking other sources for to fund the loan pool because CPA requires a 99-year deed restriction, it is unlikely a homeowner would want to do that. Ms. Chiancola notes that other communities have used HOME funds for affordable ADU loan and grant programs. Ms. Chiancola says that the City is also asking private companies to participate, such as banks.

Ms. Chiancola informed the Board that she is collaborating with public space/community artist from Beverly, Miranda Aisling, in bringing a discussion about “tiny homes” to Salem on March 23rd at 10am and 6pm. Ms. Chiancola’s participation in the discussion is focused on Accessory Dwelling Units. Preservation Planner Patricia Kelleher, is going to join the discussion to bring in the perspective of carriage homes which are a specific type of ADU in Salem. Miranda has built in and lives in a tiny home and will bring that unique insight to the discussion.

C. Public Land Update

a. 77 Willson Street

Ms. Chiancola explains that the income needed to afford a market rate apartment in Salem is about \$70,000; however, the median income of renters in Salem is about \$37,000. That gap makes it difficult for many Salem residents to find quality housing. In response to these concerns, the City of Salem’s Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board and

the City's Planning and Community Development Department have been studying several strategies to support the creation of housing options, including studying publicly owned land to see if there are opportunities to use public land for new housing, the High School property is one of a few properties that is being looked at. The High School property is several acres, much of which is not actively being used, such as the land along Highland Avenue next to the pump station.

Ms. Chiancola informs the Board that an Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) is going to take place on April 30th. The TAP is being sponsored by the Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP). The TAP is going to help explore the feasibility of adding affordable homes at the High School property that are geared towards teachers. They will study whether a teacher residency program could be created. The TAP is a quick and cost-effective approach to get insight on what can be done. The TAP consists of active land use practitioners chosen for their skills relevant to the proposed land use issue. The TAP will spend a full day working together to answer questions proposed by the city relevant to the land outcomes regarding teacher housing and a residency program.

Mayor Driscoll says that the Grounds Committee have been informed of this effort but they will need to update full School Committee. Mayor Driscoll explains that the panel will interview key stakeholders will be interviewed such as the Dean of Education at Salem State University to discuss potential partnerships. The City already partners with Salem State in many ways, including the Charlotte-Forten Fellowship program. A teacher residency program could expand the fellowship program. The TAP will also need to talk with entry level teachers to understand what kind of space they would want, what kind of job coaching would be beneficial. The program could be a recruitment tool to attract diverse teachers to the district. Currently, high housing costs also make it difficult to recruit entry level employees, including teachers who have a starting salary of \$48,000.

Mickey asks about fair housing regulations, whether it is possible to restrict housing for teachers. Ms. Chiancola says that the panel is comprised of experts that are chosen based on the questions asked. That said, she has specifically asked for a fair housing expert to be on the panel to identify whether housing can be created for teachers, if not then we can look into preferences for teachers.

A survey is also being conducted, funded by MHP, to show the boundaries and topography of the site.

b. 56 Memorial Drive

Ms. Chiancola says that the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board has identified the City-owned property located at 56 Memorial Drive and the lots owned by the South Essex Sewage District (SESD) as a few of several public sites that may be feasible for new housing. Ms. Chiancola explains that the preliminary thinking is the property could be used to create starter homes, which are smallish homes that would be affordable to first-time home buyers. Ms. Chiancola explains that there is a need for housing options in Salem as housing prices have been rising quickly. She notes that the income needed to purchase a median priced house in Salem is currently about \$96,000; however, the

median household \$67,000.

To date, the Board has reviewed the title of the property at 56 Memorial Drive, has had a preliminary discussion with the SESD Board regarding their properties, and has had the land surveyed. The surveyor is in the process of plotting the plan, which will be complete by the end of March. Ms. Chiancola says that they are still in the very preliminary stages, she also says that the land is parkland, it has ledge, it is not an easy site. Mayor Driscoll explains that there will be an in-depth community process, but first they need to conduct a feasibility study to determine whether housing could be developed there. Mr. Northcutt says he is doubtful that it would be financially feasible to create affordable homes there given the amount of ledge, which is very expensive to blast. He says if it is feasible to create affordable homes on this site, they should be at a similar scale to the current neighborhood. Councillor Madore suggest evaluating an opportunity to use Transfer Development Rights (TDR), to transfer the development rights of this land to another location.

Mayor Driscoll explains that the Board was not expecting a crowd for this discussion, they will open it up to questions but the Board may not be able to answer all of their questions reiterating that this is very preliminary.

Paul Linksy of 2 Victory Road asks if there has been a discussion regarding the expansion of Lee Fort Terrace. Mayor Driscoll says that the Salem Housing Authority is looking at opportunities to expand Lee Fort Terrace, including evaluating whether there is an opportunity to use the adjacent city owned land.

A direct abutter noted that he a survey down years ago and had his land appraised. He asked the City about buying a portion of the 56 Memorial Drive land and was told no one could ever build on it. Mayor Driscoll says that if he is interested in purchasing land that can still be worked out, but it is park land so it will take an act of the legislature. Mayor Driscoll notes that we are not going to do anything to diminish your property or the way you use it. She also says that given the way the land was created and that was intended to be used for as housing, it makes sense to evaluate it. The abutter explains that the veterans who received land for \$10 no longer live in that neighborhood and that he paid top dollar a developer being given property would not be fair. Mayor Driscoll the idea is the homes would be sold as starter homes that would be as nice as the homes that are there, they will not be free homes. That's the theory whether that is possible, we are looking at.

Brittany Kleinfelder 20 Victory Road has seen surveyors, know there is a lot of other steps but says communication is important. She said that last week she had no idea surveyors would be there and a gentleman appeared on the backdoor camera, she was scared. Moving forward she urges the city to communicate.

Nick Hamm of Larkin Lane says his home is the second house on Larkin Lane, it impacts him as well but did not receive a notice. He would appreciate an update, including the expected timeline. He has a list of questions for the City that he will go through at a later time and asks when can ask the questions and when can he expect answers.

A neighbor says there is a paper road explaining she was needed a separate land attorney for closing, because of it. She notes she was very careful about paving their property. It has been used as a dumping ground for Christmas trees, car parts, etc. It took several seasons to finish the project. She also got no notice about the surveyors. After we got the first letter asked the ward councilor who advised us to talk to the City Solicitor. We want to be part of the process.

Owner of 55 Memorial Drive says a major concern is that this is parkland. The property has been used for recreational purposes. It is a valuable piece of property the city should consider from an engineering topic from an environmental impact review there is biodiversity on the ledge. The city should consider a bio study done to consider the impact.

Property owner of 11 Victory Road asks if new development will be a dead end and whether the homes will be renters or owners or owned by the Salem Housing Authority. Mayor Driscoll responds that no determination has been made by the thinking is the land would be accessed by Fort Avenue through the SESD parcel, and it would not connect to Larkin Lane or Victory Road so they dead end roads will continue to be dead ends. As for the tenure, the thinking is it would be starter homes, which are generally first time home buyers.

A neighbor (Cindy) says to the Mayor that her biggest topic was green space, she spent \$1.3 million on Derby Street, now you want to take our valuable green space away. Cindy says they have been trying to clean the site up and now the City wants to take it. The Mayor responds that open space housing is still important there are a lot of needs and we are trying to address but also says the number one issue she is hearing is the need for homes. Another resident says this is a done deal, he is upset. The Mayor explains it is not a done deal, we are trying to be innovative and respectful.

The owner of 43 Bayview Avenue asks if affordable housing is going into any of the new huge buildings going on. Mayor Driscoll responds yes, 10% of the units in new development is affordable but it is not enough in quantity or affordability level.

Councillor Madore explains that if it is determined that it is feasible to build affordable homes on this land there will be a community process, the process will be much different than the format of tonight's meeting. It will be interactive where input will be asked of the community members.

2. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Ms. Chiancola says she is collaborating with the Council on Aging Board on a Community Preservation Act Funding Application for a Rental Subsidy. The project would specifically be for those households who have experienced an extenuating circumstance, for example, an increase in rent increase that they are unable to fulfill (gap funding). The Salem Housing Authority will manage the program. Ms. Chiancola asks the Board if they would be willing to write a letter of support for this application. The Board has questions about eligibility. Councillor Madore asks if this would fulfill the 10% requirement for Community Housing, Mickey asks if rental subsidies would qualify since they are not creating new units. Mickey notes it will depend on priorities, creating new units or subsidizing. The Mayor asks about year 2, is this going to be an ongoing

funding request. Ben Anderson asks how many households would be assisted. Ms. Chiancola will distribute the application to the Board for them to review to determine whether the Board would like to support it.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Councilor Madore makes a motion to approve the January 7, 2020 Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board meeting minutes, seconded by Ben Anderson and the motion carries unanimously.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Mickey Northcutt, seconded by Cynthia Nina-Soto—passes unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Approved by the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board on 4/7/2019

Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 30A § 18-25 and City Ordinance § 2-2028 through § 2-2033.