

**Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board Meeting**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 14, 2022**

A meeting of the Salem Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board was held on Monday, March 14, 2022, at a Remote Zoom meeting at 6:00 p.m.

**Members present:** Councilor Jeff Cohen, Councilor Caroline Watson-Felt, Lynda Fairbanks Atkins, James Willis, Mickey Northcutt, and Chris Malstrom.

**Members leaving early:** Councilor Jeff Cohen left at 6:55

**Members absent:** John Boris, Mayor Kim Driscoll, Rebecca Curran

Staff present: Senior Planner Cassie Moskos and DPCD Deputy Director Amanda Chiancola

Vice Chair Mickey Northcutt called the meeting to order with a roll call at 6:04 p.m.

**Motion to Amend the Agenda to discuss officer elections first.**

Motion by Mr. Zamborlini, second by Councilor Watson-Felt. Passed unanimously by roll call vote. Staff states that no one has communicated prior to the meeting nominations, and that unless a Board member makes a statement at now, that the nominations default to the existing officers. The Mayor is the current chair, no board member offers an alternate nomination. The Vice- Chair is Mickey Northcutt, Mr. Zamborlini states that he would be interested in holding the position, no one objects. Mr. Northcutt nominates Mr. Boris to be Treasurer. Hearing no other nominations, Councilor Morsillo motions to elect Mayor Kim Driscoll as chair, Mr. Filipe Zamborlini as Vice-Chair, and Mr. John Boris as Treasurer, seconded by James Willis. Passes unanimously by roll call vote.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Leefort Terrace Project Overview**

A presentation was given by Courtney Koslow with Beacon Communities and Cathy Hoog with Salem Housing Authority. They are looking to redevelop Leefort Terrace. It is currently 50 garden style units in the floodplain built in 1958. It is financially infeasible to renovate the units. They were awarded a grant from the DCHD and partnered with Beacon Communities to rescue the units currently there and add some additional affordable housing units. Ms. Koslow from Beacon gave an overview of Beacon Communities, including services planned to be provided at Leefort Terrace, a resident services coordinator to help connect residents to other services they may need in Salem, will have an on-site wellness program, community building events, computer learning, workforce development and training programs. The plan to increase the number of units from 50 to 124, 1-3 bedrooms, at 30-60% AMI. Since the property is in the floodplain, the first floor will be elevated to be above expected 2070 sea levels. There will be 100 parking spaces on site, 86 will be under the building. It will be all-electric with PassiveHouse design. She went on to discuss their progress and next steps. They have gone through a design process, met with residents, abutters, community members, and city officials, and held virtual community meetings. Their next steps include submitting for permitting through the City. The project requires approval from the Zoning Board of Appeals, with a planned submittal in March/April 2022. They will also need to go before the City's Conservation Commission, submission in April/May 2022. A Home Rule

Petition from the City Council on relief from public procurement procedures, and application to the CPA, and UCH-TIF for affordable housing real estate tax relief.

After their initial meeting, they knew they needed to make some adjustments to their plan so they partnered with a local group, Regenesis Group, to help with thinking of the development as part of the community and not just something that gets placed there. They also helped them make changes to the original proposal by decreasing the number of units, height of the buildings, changing from one building to two buildings, and giving existing Leefort Terrace residents a space to stay connected to each other. Ms. Koslow showed graphics of the proposed site plans of the project.



Ms. Koslow indicated plans for community gardens and public art, and they were available for questions.

Mr. Zamborlini asked about the AMI ranges and ratios that were planned, and that if there was a reason to keep the existing Leefort Terrace residents together instead of spread out throughout the development, referencing research has shown that when mixed incomes households are together it leads to greater mobility for the lower income households. Ms. Hoog responded that they are not locating all of the Leefort Terrace residents together. There is one wing of the building that will be quieter because of the floorplans of the units on that side, and one side of the wing will have the larger units, and the residents will be able to choose where in the building they would like to live. Ms. Koslow added that there are many shared spaces for the residents- lobby, community rooms, management offices, plus the residential bridges connecting the buildings. She went on to state that 100% will be at least 60% AMI, of those 13 will 30% AMI or less. Inclusive of the 13 at 30% there will be 65 units that have Section 8 vouchers which require 50% AMI or less.

Councilor Cohen from a sustainability aspect, this development does a lot of good things, PassiveHouse, 2070 floodplain levels, etc. He also wanted to mention that building will be universal design-which is important for Salem in general.

Councilor Watson-Felt wished to hear more about how the rental rate of the existing Leefort Terrace residents when then come back to the new building. Ms. Hoog stated the Leefort Terrace residents pay 30% of their income in rent, including utilities. That rental rate will remain the

same, nothing will change for them.

Ms. Moskos let the Chair know that questions had been asked in the Q&A box and a member of the public had their hand raised, acknowledging that this is not a public hearing so the Chair could hold the comments until the public comment period or take them now.

The Q&A question from the Q&A was if the AMI was for the gross income for the individual or the household? Ms. Koslow responded that it for the household. If there is one earner, they use that amount, if it's a family of four with 1 or 2 earners, they use that number. They hold the rest of the comments in the Q&A until they are accepting public comments on the topic, after the Board finishes their questions.

Mr. Zamborlini felt that intergenerational housing is great, had there been any consideration for on-site child care, not just for people who live on site, but open to the community? Ms. Koslow stated that at the moment they are not considering any commercial space, which is what a child care facility would be considered, for this site as they are trying to maximize the amount of housing units. They have looked at it for other sites they have worked on.

Councilor Morsillo asked what happens to the rent on a unit after an existing Leefort Terrace resident leaves? Will they be targeted for seniors, disabled, how will they be handled? Ms. Koslow stated that they want a preference for elderly families. Councilor Morsillo followed up about the rental rate. Ms. Koslow responded that the rental rates will be set in perpetuity. Mr. Willis sought further clarification on the rents, asking when an existing Leefort Terrace person leaves will the rent jump from 30% to a 50% or 60% AMI? Ms. Koslow stated that it is more underlying rates. The project will always have 13 units at 30% AMI, and there are the voucher units that will always be under 50%, and the balance will be at 60%. It will be less about the individual units, but the distribution of rates across the development.

Councilor Morsillo asked if there are seniors in other public housing buildings will there be any preference for them to move to this building? Ms. Hoog stated that they would have the right to apply, but it would not be a transfer because this would be a different type of building, and no longer a Salem Housing Authority building.

Mr. Northcutt asked them to address how they are going to handle the relocation and the financing strategy for the project. Ms. Hoog stated that Salem Housing Authority would be working with a separate business called Housing Opportunities unlimited. They specialize in helping people with in this situation, planning, packing, moving, unpacking, and reversing that after the new building is complete. People will be supported throughout the process. It will be a big feat to find 50 units for this project. Ms. Koslow stated that the primary funding source will be 4% low income tax credit and state housing tax credit, a mortgage, hopefully \$200,000 from CPA, rebates from PassiveHouse construction, and the state public housing side has some additional funding options to help them partner with developers to do projects similar to this one. Mr. Northcutt appreciated that people are using different funding sources because that allows more housing to be built in Salem because not everyone is trying to tap the same resources.

Mr. Zamborlini wanted to clarify that all of the units will count towards Salem SHI. Ms. Koslow

indicated that yes, they will all count towards the SHI.

A member of the public, Harrison Shey at 170 North Street. He stated he had been a property manager in Boston for 16 years, a lot of the properties he manages are affordable housing or ADA compliant type developments, as well as certified housing purchased from the state with the stipulation from the Boston Planning and Development Agency for low-income restricted units. He has an understanding about some of the project. Some things that raised his eyebrows included BPDA starts out at 40% for the first year and then 50%, and in the third year 60%, to not penalize people for having a growing income. Believes rents should be capped at 40% AMI similar to Boston. He believes a bocci court is pointless, the property management office on site is a 9-5 daily job that won't be doing a whole lot, believes there is no reason to include a section 8 requirement cap because you can't turn around BHA (Boston Housing Authority) voucher holder, so there is no reason for a cap. Harrison believes that two people who make income individually, but who live together shouldn't be allowed to rent because together they make enough money to afford a market rate unit. He would like to know the average median income for Salem.

Mr. Northcutt responded that Salem is part of the Boston Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and HUD requires all cities to use the average median income for the MSA they are in to calculate affordable housing rates. Salem is not allowed to set rents at the City level, the MSA number has to be used. He also believes that its not uncommon for a property of this size to have a property manager to connect with the residents. In terms of the Section 8 cap, Mr. Northcutt clarifies that there is not a cap on resident vouchers, but there are project based vouchers that will stay with the property even if the tenant moves. Ms. Koslow further states there are 50 project-based voucher units. Also there is a currently a property manager at Leefort Terrace today; it is not a 24 hour service. She also clarified that income that two people together making \$100,000 would not qualify as they would be over the median income. It is the gross income of the household as a whole needs to be under 60% AMI.

Ms. Koslow asks for a support letter to include for their applications for funding and zoning. Ms. Hoog states that she is available to answer any questions any time about the project. Ms. Chiancola asks the Board

Councilor Watson-Felt states that she previously checked with the City Solicitor regarding letter of support from City Councilors since they will be applying for CPA funds which are approved by the Council. The Solicitor responded that Councilors should not send letters of support, but Councilor Watson-Felt is not sure if that applies to the Board as a whole. Mr. Zamborlini and Ms. Chiancola state that they know the Board has written letters of support in the past. Ms. Chiancola states that one option is to have individual members of the Board write letters of support. Mr. Northcutt asks Staff to further investigate this matter, but to vote to write a letter to be reviewed by the City Solicitor. So moved by Mr. Malstrom, seconded by Councilor Watson-Felt, passes unanimously by roll call vote 7-0.

## **B. Future Meeting Format**

The special act allowing for entirely remote meetings is set to expire in July but starting in April the City is allowing Boards to switch to hybrid meetings if they so choose. Staff's question is if the Board would like to remain remote or switch to hybrid?

Mr. Zamborlini responds he would like to stay remote as long as possible. Councilor Morsillo stated that the majority of the other boards and commissions in the city are staying remote. Ms. Chiancola stated that it would take new legislation from the State to allow for hybrid or remote participation beyond July. Mr. Northcutt indicated he preferred remote/hybrid options.

**C. New Items**

Mr. Northcutt wishes to discuss an analytical impact of redevelopment on naturally occurring affordable housing, especially centered around the Shetland Park redevelopment. Mr. Zamborlini would like to discuss the Boards priorities, especially inclusionary zoning. Ms. Chiancola points out that the Salem Housing Roadmap will be completed in the coming months and will provide the Board with many new strategies and tools to explore. Councilor Watson-Felt asks that the Boards table be redistributed as a reference point.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**A. Update on the Salem Housing Road Map: A Housing Plan for All**

Ms. Moskos gave an update on the project. The next community forum would be held on March 22, 2022 also conducted via Zoom where the consultant team would the draft goals and some of the strategies for the public to get their feedback on.

**B. Update on the Condo Conversion**

Ms. Chiancola stated the City was printing approximately 8,000 pamphlets to be mailed to all tenants in buildings with 8 units or less and all landlords of those buildings. The pamphlet will include a link to a survey for people to complete. Staff will provide feedback received to the Board once the survey closes.

**MINUTES**

Councilor Watson-Felt made a motion to approve the minutes from January 26, 2022 meeting, seconded by Ms. Fairbanks-Atkins-passes unanimously 7-0 by a roll call vote.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No additional public comments were received.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion to adjourn by Mr. Zamborlini, seconded by Councilor Morsillo—passes unanimously 7-0 by a roll call vote.*

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Approved by the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board on 5/3/2022.

Respectively submitted,  
Cassie Moskos, AICP  
Senior Planner