

Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board Meeting
Approved Meeting Minutes
July 6, 2021

A meeting of the Salem Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board was held on Tuesday, July 6, 2021, at a Remote Zoom meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Members present: Mayor Kim Driscoll, Mickey Northcutt, Filipe Zamborlini, Rebecca Curran, Caroline Watson-Felt, Councilor Patricia Morsillo, Councilor Christine Madore.

Members absent: Councilor Ty Hapworth and John Boris

Staff present: Amanda Chiancola, Deputy Director of Planning and Community Development.

Chair Mayor Kim Driscoll called the meeting to order with a roll call vote at 6:05 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Disposition Ordinance Update

Amanda Chiancola explains that at the last Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board voted to form subgroups to focus on research and drafting a disposition ordinance and a condominium conversion ordinance. Mickey Northcutt and Councilor Ty Hapworth are assisting Ms. Chiancola with the public land disposition ordinance. Councilor Madore is leading the condominium conversion research, working with Councilor Morsillo, Filipe Zamborlini and Caroline Watson-Felt.

Ms. Chiancola says the disposition working group reviewed an outline of an updated ordinance and they are still working through it. The goal is to make sure when land is disposed it serves a public process and if that land is suitable for housing then the public benefit is affordable housing. We talked about starting fresh with a new ordinance, it was helpful to collect our thoughts and think about how we want to approach the ordinance. Then she met with the City Solicitor to walk through the ordinance, pick her brain on what is working and what is not working in the current ordinance since she works with the ordinance regularly and knows it well. The Solicitor recommended rather than having a brand-new ordinance and scrapping the old one, that we red line the existing ordinance. Now that we have an outline of how we want to approach the revisions, we can start working through the edits in track changes to the existing ordinance. That will make it very clear for the City Council, what is changing. The current ordinance has an inventory approach that requires a biannual inventory or all city owned land, and each parcel is supposed to be evaluated to decided whether it is retained or disposed of. With the amendment ordinance, we want to evaluate parcels to be disposed of rather than evaluating every property that should be retained. Her next step is scheduling another meeting with Councillor Hapworth, Mickey and the City Solicitor. She wants it vetted by the City Solicitor before brining a draft version to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board to review and provide comments and get public comments on it.

Ms. Watson-Felt asked when the last time an inventory was done with perception of parcel potential. Ms. Chiancola responds that we have an inventory or all city owned land but she is not sure when the last time the land was categorized as being retained or not.

Ms. Curran-Cutting asks whether tax tile is included. Ms. Chiancola responds yes. Ms. Curran-Cutting says she agrees we should be working with the current ordinance and redlining it because it makes it clear what is being changed.

Mr. Northcutt thanks Amanda, they looked at a few other cities, how they handled this. It is helpful to make sure it is consistent with how other communities have prioritized affordable housing without making it too difficult to administer.

B. Condominium Conversion Update

Ms. Chiancola says she provided material in the sharepoint, examples from other communities and data on conversions that have occurred in Salem.

Councillor Madore hopes to have material to share by the next meeting. She highlights takeaways from the state statute that she has been reviewing. It was adopted in 1985 and amendment in 1989 to make it more robust. The state statute is stringent on relocation payments, right to purchase, requirements on the size of the buildings and notifications for tenants prior to eviction. We need to find a way to draft a local ordinance that meets the needs in Salem. For the state, the requirement is 4 units or above, we could tighten that up at a local level, but she needs to validate it through data before providing a recommendation. Currently the state only requires a year for notification and for protected classes, e.g., low income, elderly, people with a disability it is a two-year notification with a two-year possible extension. But other communities have adopted local ordinances that have longer notifications prior to eviction. There were several challenges faced by cities and towns that adopted local ordinances because they saw that it was counter productive given that lots of condo conversions that have already happened so it was a moot point, she hopes we can get ahead on the rapid conversions that we have seen over the past few years. Councillor Madore says she hopes to have a table of examples of ordinances and bylaws to look over and identify the best path for Salem.

Mr. Zamborlini notes the data available only goes back to 2016 and asks if they could get that data that goes back to 2000, it would be helpful to see if there are certain years when there were more conversions. Ms. Chiancola says she will follow up with the City Assessor. Mayor Driscoll says the challenge with that is how people pull a permit, they pull a permit for a renovation, and it ends up being a condo but the master deed doesn't get recorded with the city it gets recorded with the registry so it gets chased, the processes are not tight because it hits the registry at the last point. We will need to make sure we are asking the right questions at the front end of permitting rather than trying to chase it at the back end. Councillor Madore agrees, the implementation is a key factor in how successful it will be, many communities been dealing with it some have separate permits and board reviews for conversions.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Housing Production Plan Update

Mayor Driscoll notes we have a new senior planner, Cassie Moskos, and this is on her list among

other things. Ms. Chiancola provides an update- we issued a request for proposals and got those back. We will be issuing a notice of intent to award to JM Goldson Inc, the consultant that prepared our housing needs assessment update. Jenn Goldson has prepared a ton of housing production plans and housing related guidance documents. Ms. Chiancola notes that the consultant's references from other communities noted that she does not prepare a cookie cutter plan, they are not all the same, she tailors it to the community wants so it will include the requirements of DHCD but it will also be looking at a community housing goal.

Mr. Northcutt provides an update on two North Shore CDC projects. They will be closing on the financing on the Lighthouse project any day now and breaking ground soon. It should all be finished by the end of 2022- 46 new apartments about 1/3 are 30% area median income (AMI) and the other 2/3 are 60% AMI. The school renovations are ready and just waiting for financing, they are permitted and shovel ready, so they are pursuing financing rounds that are available. They have been calling the project on Lafayette Street the South River Project. They are working on a better more descriptive name for the whole campus. Mr. Northcutt expects that they will be ready with a new name when they roll out the updated designs in the fall. They are doing major program changes based on comments, but the essence of the program will stay, a brand-new health center and affordable senior housing somewhere in the neighborhood of 50 units. When the plans are ready, he will share the plans at a future Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board.

The Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board discussed meeting remotely versus in person. Mayor Driscoll explains that the legislature issued revised guidance, each city and town may continue to meet remotely or in person, so the boards and commissions could vote to meet in person. Mayor Driscoll says they tried to encourage all boards and commissions to hold off on meeting in person until the hybrid option set up in place. It would allow us to meet in person when they want to but most importantly allow people to participate remotely. The Information Technology department is working with the City Solicitor on a hybrid approach, we are not quite set up with that yet in terms of technology much of which is on back order and staffing since a hybrid will take more than one staff member to manage. The board could vote to meet in person but she recommends voting to continue to meet remotely until a hybrid option is available. Mr. Northcutt thanks the Mayor for steering towards flexibility in the long run. One of the great lessons from COVID is allowing participation remotely. He also notes that many of the board members sit on more than one city boards among others, he never imagined they would be able to do this from the comfort of their own home but he would prefer to continue to have that flexibility it is a great format for people with children and pets, he acknowledges it is expensive.

Mickey Northcutt makes a motion to maintain remote meetings until a hybrid option is available, seconded by Rebecca Curran and passes unanimously 7-0.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. May 4, 2021 draft minutes

Motion to approve the minutes by Mickey Northcutt, seconded by Caroline Watson-Felt, and passes with a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Christine Madore, Patricia Morsillo, Caroline Watson-Felt, and Mickey Northcutt) and two abstaining (Filipe Zamborlini and Rebecca Curran) and one present

(Mayor Driscoll).

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Rebecca Curran, seconded by Mickey Northcutt—passes unanimously 7-0 by a roll call vote.

Meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Approved by the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board **on 9/7/2020**

Respectively submitted,
Amanda Chiancola, AICP
Deputy Director

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