

**Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
May 3, 2022**

A meeting of the Salem Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board was held on Tuesday, May 3, 2022, at a Remote Zoom meeting at 6:00 p.m.

**Members present:** Councilor Jeff Cohen, James Willis, Lynda Fairbanks Atkins, Councilor Patti Morsillo, Vice Chair Filipe Zamborlini, Councilor Caroline Watson-Felt.

**Members joining late:** Chris Malstrom and Mickey Northcutt at 6:23 pm

**Members absent:** John Boris, Mayor Kim Driscoll, Becky Curan

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

Vice-Chair Filipe Zamborlini called the meeting to order with a roll call at 6:07 p.m.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Juniper Point/Bertini's PUD presentation**

Ms. Moskos introduced Joe Correnti, Kristin Kolick and Mark Tranos representatives of the Juniper Point/Bertini's PUD project. Mr. Correnti introduced the project that will be sited on Canal Street. This site is on previously disturbed land and the new development will remain in the footprint of the previously disturbed land. The entire site is 12 acres, but 8 of those acres are located in Rosie's Pond or adjacent wetlands and are therefore undevelopable. Mr. Correnti stated that one of the goals is to create more access to the pond. This is a project that will have to go before many board and commissions in the City. They have already gone before Zoning Board of Appeals; their next step will be filing with the Planning Board. Their proposal includes a total of seven buildings, two of which will be mixed use. Four of the buildings will be located in a quad formation to prevent overly long facades. The majority of the building will be located under the buildings, this made the buildings taller which was the reason for the ZBA request. Along Canal Street there will be two 3-story buildings, the first floor of these will be commercial and the remaining interior buildings will be fully residential. Mr. Correnti showed some initial renderings but noted that both the Planning Board and Design Review Board will review the renderings. They went on to note the Planning Board has a policy that requires 10% of units be affordable at 60% AMI, but this projects proposal is to include 20% of units at 60% AMI. That translates to approximately 54 units. Mr. Correnti concluded that they were requesting a letter of support and were available to answer any questions.

Mr. Zamborlini asked them to repeat the numbers, number of units, number of affordable. Mr. Correnti responded that while the footprint and height have been set, the final floor plan is still a little in flux. They believe the unit count will come in between 270-275 and the number of affordable units will be between 54-55 at 60% AMI.

Councilor Cohen mentioned that he had been to several meetings related to this project, and he is very partial to this concept. He had two things to note, Canal Street does not really have an identity and this project could help change that. Two, he sees this a workforce housing-Salem State, the hospital, perhaps a future train station. He is in support.

Councilor Morsillo asked they keep in mind 3-bedroom units, they are people inquiring about them. She also asked when this project would be before the Conservation Commission. Mr. Correnti stated that they usually run Planning Board and Conservation Commission concurrently, but right after the first Planning Board meeting to avoid any major changes from Planning Board.

Mr. Zamborlini asked if it would be 100% rental or will there be any opportunity for affordable ownership? Mr. Tranos stated that they only have rental in mind for this project with a focus on workforce housing. Mr. Zamborlini followed up by asking about the rents numbers and what they might be, Mr. Tranos responded that those numbers are provided by their staff member who works with the people applying for the affordable units. Ms. Chiancola added that the units will be on the state's Subsidized Housing Inventory. Those units will need to be approved by the City and DCHD; DCHD will set the maximum rent for those people who are earning 60% of the AMI, which will be at most 30% of their incomes.

Councilor Morsillo stated that it is great to do 20% affordable units.

Mr. Zamborlini asked the applicants if they were requesting a letter of support. Mr. Correnti responded yes, if the board finds the concept supportable. The letter helps when going before other boards.

Mr. Willis asked how the letters work. Ms. Moskos responded that the Board usually takes a motion for their preferred action, if in support Ms. Moskos refers to the notes and meeting recording to draft a letter that reflects the comments from the Board. The letter is then sent to the applicant Ms. Chiancola adds that the letter is general. The ask is for support of the affordability competent. It generally doesn't speak to the other components of the project, although the Board could comment on those if they wished. Mr. Willis stated he was comfortable with the process.

Councilor Cohen makes a motion of support especially the affordability, seconded by Mr. Willis, passes unanimously 8-0 by a roll call vote.

#### **B. Future Items.**

None were introduced.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **A. Housing Roadmap Update**

Ms. Moskos states that there is no new information and the timeline for the Steering Committee to give comments on the initial draft will be May 25<sup>th</sup>. Then a public presentation to the Planning Board and City Council will be scheduled for June.

#### **B. Status of the condominium conversion ordinance**

Ms. Chiancola started by stating that the Home Rule Testimony at the State House had been scheduled. She asked if the Board would like to start their discussion by deciding if they wanted to send a letter to the State House in support of the Salem's request to reduce the number of units from 4 to 2. Councilor Morsillo stated that it is important for the Board to support this because it has been our project, we can also send letters as individuals. Councilor Cohen adds he already sent in a letter of support but doesn't feel that the Ward 5 Councilor is as important as a letter from the Board as a whole. Mr. Willis feels it would be strange if the Board did not send a letter as it has been working on this for so long. Mr. Northcutt asks if Staff has capacity to write the letter. Ms. Moskos responds that yes, Staff can draft the letter. Mr. Zamborlini adds that he used to work in the state legislature and written testimony helps. Any and all.

Councilor Morsillo makes a motion of support, seconded by Councilor Watson-Felt, passes unanimously 8-0 by a roll call vote.

The discussion continued in the area of the preliminary results from the survey that was sent to landlords and tenants in Salem. Since the memo had been distributed, there were additional responses bringing the total to 222. Ms. Chiancola wanted to keep the survey open a little bit longer as responses were still coming in. She stated that there was a technical difficulty where the QR code had stopped working because it had been used too many times that month, but now that a new month had started it was working again. People also had the option of going directly to [imaginesalem.com](http://imaginesalem.com) which was printed on the flyer as well to participate. Ms. Chiancola also stated that 53% of the respondents were tenants. She went on to state some additional facts that had come out thus far from the survey.

- Most people support a longer notification period.

- When it came to protected classes, most people felt two years was sufficient. Some phone calls staff received relayed concerns regarding how this might impact older homeowners planning to sell their property for retirement needs and owner-occupied units.

- People tended to be in favor of increase relocation costs over the state agencies. There are state agencies that assist with this. Many people said that even \$2,500 was not enough. A common reoccurrence was owner occupied units being converted by older adults, is there a way for them to seek an exception.

Ms. Chiancola concluded that it may be necessary to have trainings for landlords on the final version if passed, especially around renter discrimination.

Councilor Watson-Felt asked if any additional outreach efforts were planned? Ms. Chiancola stated that many people had a hard time understanding the premise even with the pamphlet and website and asked the Board if they were interested in hosting an engagement session on the topic.

Mr. Zamborlini was concerned about misinformation and alarmed seeing people not wanting to rent to protected classes, threats of raising rents, makes him think that more engagement won't help, and that waiting to take action feel detrimental as well. Councilor Watson-Felt clarified she meant additional engagement while the survey is open. Mr. Zamborlini stated his comments are in response to the comments seen this evening. Councilor Morsillo is hesitant to respond to reactionary comment. These are the types of comments she expected, since 4 years is a long time.

Councilor Cohen wanted to reinforce Councilor Watson-Felt and Mr. Zamborlini's comments and concerns. He stated that all of the units near him have had their rents raised, and none of the previous tenants have found places in Salem. The Board needs to think about what does the most good for the most amount of people.

Councilor Watson-Felt agrees with Councilor Cohen and that the Board should harken back to the beginning of this work. Tenants Right's workshop, even for state level rights. Most tenants do not know their rights. What else can we do to let tenants know their rights?

Councilor Morsillo asks how the Housing Stability group, and what kind of activity are they seeing? Ms. Chiancola responds that it is hosted by the Essex County Bar Association partnership with the City to provide free information and resources. A tenant or landlord can meet with an attorney from the Essex County Bar Association, there are drop in hours at CLC and Espacio, there are phone hours to call in and make appointments. She provided an example of a landlord and tenant pair that needed some assistance with mediation, there have been several tenants come in. There is one attorney staffing it, so she has

been busy. City Staff has also been volunteering to greet people and let them know if the attorney is busy, get them started with paperwork. They have also been working on an event to help inform tenants of their rights and looking at a landlord workshop. She encourages the Board to share and promote it as it is a free resource. Councilor Morsillo follows up by asking how it has been marketed thus far, for example have flyers been sent out through the food pantry? Ms. Chiancola stated that she was unsure, but if not, she would investigate doing so.

**C. Disposition Ordinance**

Ms. Chiancola went through the ordinance and the final revisions with the Board, informing them it had been reviewed by the City Solicitor and the City’s Purchasing Agent. This ordinance recognizes that when the city has land it no longer needs it needs a process to for the sale or lease of that land. She notes that the AHTF Board would be exempt from the ordinance as it falls under the State’s 30B requirements. This ordinance establishes priority uses for land and puts affordable housing at the top of the list.

Councilor Watson-Felt had a question regarding Section 2-1635 about how often the list is reviewed. Ms. Chiancola stated that the city maintains a list of city owned properties and their uses, but the properties are reviewed at time of disposition.

Mr. Zamborlini had a question about the description of the factors that have made a parcel undevelopable. He wanted to know if that was public information or for the council to know the determination was made? Ms. Chiancola stated that at this point in the process, the Council would have already voted the property surplus, so this information would be for the public when the advertisement is distributed.

Mr. Northcutt asks what are the next steps? Ms. Chiancola states that it will be filed with the Mayor’s office with the request that she recommend it to the City Council.

Councilor Watson-Felt asks if this is the final-final version. Ms. Chiancola states that the only change is what just happened. Councilor Watson-Felt clarifies that no other planned changes. Councilor Morsillo states that there will be plenty of time to discuss the ordinance in committee.

Mr. Northcutt motions to send the draft ordinance to the Mayor’s office, seconded by Councilor Watson-Felt. A roll call vote took place with the following response:

Councilor Jeff Cohen	Yes
Lynda Fairbanks Atkins	Yes
Councilor Patti Morsillo	Yes
Councilor Caroline Watson-Felt	Yes
Chris Malstrom	Yes
Mickey Northcutt	Yes
James Willis	No
Filipe Zambolini	Yes

The motion passes 7-1.

Councilor Morsillo asks Mr. Willis why he voted no. Mr. Willis stated he would rather not discuss now that the vote has been taken. Mr. Zamborlini states that Staff is available if he would like to discuss

anything with them in the future.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Councilor Cohen motioned to approve the minutes from March 14, 2022 and April 5, 2022, seconded by Councilor Morsillo. Passed unanimously by roll call vote 8-0.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No comments were received.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion to adjourn by Mr. Northcutt, seconded by Councilor Watson-Felt—passes unanimously 8-0 by a roll call vote.*

Meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Approved by the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board on 06/29/2022.

Respectively submitted,  
Cassie Moskos, AICP  
Senior Planner