Housing Partnership
Wednesday, November 7, 2018 - 7:00pm

Members Present: Addie Mae Weiss, Libby Yon, Alycia Goody, and Mark Brown

Excused members: Michael Haynes, John Hudson and Chris Decker

Update on Housing Trust situation. The Partnership was tasked with seeking information to establish a non-profit housing trust. Addie Mae Weiss and Alycia Goody participated in a conference call with Town Planner, Gino Carlucci and Town Counsel, Lee Smith of KP Law to discuss Housing Trust options for Sherborn. Some pros and cons of a private vs municipal trust were discussed and as example it was explained the Town of Concord has both. In the municipal trust the Select board has authority to set policy and guidelines, but the trust board members handle day-to-day operations. There is a challenge finding volunteers for these boards and desired qualities are those with experience in real estate, legal, architecture, and engineering. The Concord Housing trust has received gifts of land donations and Community Preservation Funds to assist with creating affordable housing. At this time Sherborn Housing Partnership is continuing to explore whether a 1993 Sherborn Community Housing Corporation can be revived.

The Partnership discussed concerns about a lack of process at the state organizations level for keeping relevant Town committees updated regarding status of site approval letter and other processes related to affordable housing. Several Housing Partnership members learned through a forwarded email exchange that the apartment 40B project, Villages at Sherborn, has not received a site approval letter. There is confusion whether the blame lies with the Developer, Trask inc., or with MHP, the State Agency responsible for 40B Rental projects. MHP is saying the Developer has been out of communication and given the amount of time passed, a new application may be required. Housing Partnership members discussed how challenging it makes planning and supporting elements of projects when there is no communication in writing to provide status updates and explanation for delays. The town voted approval in December 2017 to rezone land on Coolidge Street under EA for a project proposed by Trask with an understanding that an adjacent Trask 40B rental development which would assist the town to add needed SHI affordable units to gain control over 40B projects would be linked by shared infrastructure. Even though the town does not have a vote on 40B projects the implication was support for the developer’s profitable EA ownership project would be granted to enable support for the developer’s commitment to a suitable rental development under the 40B process. Learning a year later in a round-about manner that the Villages apartment has no site approval letter to begin ZBA hearings and peer review is frustrating. There is no regulatory protocol for this process. The Partnership would like to request a process be established for Sherborn to be better updated of projects in writing of and when possible to be informed of the reasons for any objections at the state level. Regarding the parcel of land rezoned under EA the committee discussed how the only opportunity to undo an EA rezone is if the Planning Board felt the project had changed more than 10% from its original proposal which would require a new preliminary development plan approval at Town Meeting.

Housing Partnership discussed the October 24th presentation to Town about a proposed development at 41 North Main Street. At the presentation an assisted living building of 120 units was proposed with some retail food market and a restaurant. During the presentation the land west of the tracks along Hunting Lane was not discussed for development. Despite the Housing Partnership receiving mixed response from DHCD state agencies about how Assisted Living units would be counted on the Federal
Census and affect at Town’s SHI and overall housing numbers, the developer’s legal counsel insisted the assisted living would not be a detriment to the town’s SHI count. At this November 7th meeting Housing Partnership members discussed concerns about how the assisted living units would be counted on the 2020 census and also concern for a lack of any affordable housing being proposed within a dense development.

41 North Main Street developer/land owner, Gary Lybarski of Barsky Corp. popped in as a guest giving Housing Partnership members a chance to express some concerns about a lack of SHI affordable units in a dense development proposal. It was explained this was a first proposal by Barsky and input would be considered to try and design something Town would support.

8:20 Meeting Adjourned

Minutes approved by committee
And respectfully submitted by Addie Mae Weiss