

Town of Lenox
Affordable Housing Trust & Committee
March 7, 2019

The Affordable Housing Trust & Committee convened at 4:09 PM

Members Present 6

Carol Haythorne.....CH
Jackie McNinch.....JM
Mary Beth Mitts.....MBM
Charlene Rosen.....CR
Kate McNulty-Vaughn.....KMOV
Olga Weiss.....OW

Members Absent 1

Mindi Morin

Also in Attendance: Gwen Miller (GM), Director of Land Use/Town Planner; Clarence Fanto, Reporter, *Berkshire Eagle*

Sawmill Update

MBM and GM gave an update of the 4-hour Sawmill Selection Committee meeting which occurred on March 5, 2019. The two developers who submitted proposals to the Town to develop the Sawmill property are Pennrose Properties (PP) and Berkshire Housing Development Corporation in partnership with Community Development Corporation of South Berkshire (CDCSB). Both made hour long presentations and answered questions. There are additional questions which will be answered by e-mail.

The PP plan would construct 46 affordable units (40 at 60% and below of the area median income (AMI), where many households exist), and 10 market rate units. They are planning clusters of 4 buildings with a total of 10 or 12 buildings, around a green with a community room. Their presentation did not include explanations by a geo-tech engineer, but they have hired a wetlands specialist. CH stated that Charlie Adams, regional vice-president of PP came across very well.

BHDC, represented by its president Elton Ogden, has considerable experience in developing projects in the Berkshires. They expanded a senior project in Great Barrington and constructed 40 new affordable housing units to replace units destroyed by Hurricane Irene. BHDC would have 50 apartments, 41 affordable, and 9 market rate, in 5 buildings. The developer has a vision of one big happy family. Foresight Land Services' civil engineer explored the environmental issues on the property for BHDC and explained the project's affect on the salamander population.

MBM called the references of both developers and received good reports that both had done great jobs on their 40B projects. CH stated that both developers were very earnest and conversational. KMOV stated that their tone was good and not adversarial. Several direct abutters from Stoneledge Drive spoke in opposition. Some abutters have submitted written comments in opposition. Other Lenox residents have submitted comments in favor of the project.

OW commented on the difference in the number of units and the different cost per unit of the proposals. She is concerned about the quality of the project, and the lack of basements for storage and its impact on families, as well as the sustainability of the construction without basements in a fragile area.

MBM pointed out that it is part of the 40B process to make the best selection for the Town. She is hopeful that at the next meeting the developers will respond to the remaining questions, and a developer will be selected. GM stated that developer must be approved by Town Meeting warrant. The schedule is tight for May, so a special town meeting is a possibility.

Executive Session

At 4:30 PM all members voted to go into Executive Session. MBM stated and members agreed that identifying the properties in public would be a detriment to the negotiations. Clarence Fanto left.

Next Meeting and Adjournment

Members agreed to hold the next meeting on 3/13 at 4:00 PM. The meeting adjourned at 5:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene Rosen