

Town of Weston
Minutes for the Elderly Housing Committee
Tuesday, May 04, 2021
Brook School Apartments
Weston, MA 02493
Zoom Meeting

Attendees:

EHC Members: Tom Timko – Chair, Melissa Brokalakis, Tack Chace, John Hennessey, and Carol Ott

Town of Weston: Monyette Vickers, BSA Manager; Ed Jarobski, BSA Maintenance Specialist

Tenants/Public: Paul and Rachel Bau, Patti Davenport, Paul Foley, Judith Harding, Shirley Small-Rougeau, Lanna Yuen, Nancy Orth.

Town of Weston: Monyette Vickers, BSA Manager; Ed Jarobski, BSA Maintenance Specialist

Meeting called to order at 7:52 AM

Call to Order 7:48 a.m.

“Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor’s March 15, 2020 Order concerning imposition on strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, meetings in the Town of Weston will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. We will strive to provide access to such meetings via a link to call in, or other similar option. In the event we are unable to accommodate the same, despite best efforts, we will post recorded sessions of the meeting as soon as possible following the same. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings.”

Minutes: Minutes from the April 2021 meeting were approved on a roll call vote.

Brook School Apartments Update – Monyette

Vacancies: There is one market unit and one subsidized unit available. The subsidized unit is being brought up to date. There will be an internal transfer to fill that subsidized unit.

Housing Certification Specialist: There was a candidate, but she did not work out because of transportation issues. Now Monyette is working with the Robert Half agency. Monyette hopes to have a temp start next week, two days a week for six hours each, within the Monday-Thursday time frame.

Covid-19 Safety Protocols: Everyone is still masking and social distancing, three to six feet, inside. Outside individuals are not required to wear masks but still must socially distance. Grills have been put out. Monyette is considering an ice cream day, and similar ideas. John asked how long it will be before everything is back to normal. Monyette said it depends upon the recommendations of the Board of Health, the CDC, and on when everyone gets vaccinated.

Vaccines: 90% of the BSA residents have been vaccinated. The 10% did not make it to the clinics for a variety of reasons. There were discussions about how to get those 10% vaccinated. Monyette will send them a letter telling them to go to the local CVS to get vaccinated. Somebody suggested BSA have some “vaccinated only” events. Vaccination only events would put a little pressure on the unvaccinated individuals to get vaccinated. Monyette stated she can’t make people get vaccinated. HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) restrictions limit who is allowed to know if someone is vaccinated. Someone wanted to know if and when Monyette will follow up with the 10%. Monyette is in the process of writing a letter to them.

Melissa said it would be really good if Joyce, the COA (Council on Aging) social worker, could be represented at the EHC’s monthly meeting. Monyette mentioned the COA is trying to hire a second social worker.

LIP Application – Monyette (Local Initiative Program)

Yesterday Liz Valenta, Monyette, and Tom met and discussed the DHCD (Department of Housing and Community Development) process and how to proceed. Liz Valenta stated that we planned to take 25%, six of the 24 units, and remove the local preference. BSA would then fill these six going through a new lottery. This would put the six units on Weston’s Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). We expected that DHCD would then add the remaining 18 units to Weston’s SHI. Liz explained that even with the new regulatory agreement we submitted in early April, DHCD stated they would only approve for the SHI the six units with the local preference removed. DHCD will not add the remaining 18 units unless BSA removes the local preference.

As Tom requested in the April meeting, Tack checked to see if the Town Meeting minutes or the CPC (Community Preservation Committee) minutes showed a vote that required the EHC to have some units from Building D on Weston’s SHI. No votes required the units to be put on Weston’s SHI.

Tack asked if before the CPC would approve any further funding of BSA would the CPC require we get the Building D units on the SHI. Tom replied that since the time when the CPC implied that, the CPC has changed and the circumstances in the Town have changed.

There is a process for finding applicants for the BSA apartments. If we proceed with the LIP application we would end up with a parallel process for just those six units in Building D. The consensus was that that process would have been worth the extra work for if we could add all 24 Building D units to the SHI, but not for only six that DHCD will only allow. There was a motion to table the LIP application for the six units and not visit it in the future.

The motion passed unanimously.

So that it would be clearly stated in the record, Tack moved that that both the subsidized and market rate units in Building D should be subject to Weston’s local preference rule.

(Every second available unit in Building D will be offered to next individual on the waitlist with a Weston Affiliation. The following qualify as a Weston affiliation: current or former Weston resident, immediate relative of a Weston resident, current or former employee of the Town, current or former METCO student, or parents of a METCO student.)

The motion passed unanimously.

Common Area Space Study Update– Tom

Weston's PBC (Permanent Building Committee) selected CBI to generate the design and construction documents for the proposed storage units and common space changes. CBI will use the Genap documents as the basic foundation. When CBI completes the design work the project will go out to bid. We want the construction documents and the proposed vendor/contractor in hand prior to the Special Town Meeting in the fall where we will ask for the funding. Ideally construction could start in November or December.

Building E - EHC

Liz Valenta is working on the financial models we need to proceed. There is a question of whether we should go to the Town Meeting to bond the building or go to the CPC. Tom and Monyette met with Liz. The required funds still appear to be a reasonable number, something the Town or the CPC could fund. Liz should have a pro forma developed by our June meeting.

We discussed Sunrise and Wingate. Sunrise is for sale and Wingate apparently is in some sort of transition as one of the two contiguous facilities has closed. Wingate may have already been sold. The Board put forth multiple ideas about expanding and adjusting either site for elderly housing or affordable housing for Weston. Could the Sunrise and Wingate facilities give us twice the space of Building E and at half the cost? These buildings are in good shape. Sunrise has been closed for many months and has come to the Town asking for a tax abatement. Sunrise has 29 units and common space with a kitchen and a dining room. Sunrise has septic and parking. Could the Town purchase Sunrise and make modifications to the building to enlarge the units to make them apartments? Sunrise's neighborhood has accepted Sunrise already so there should not be neighborhood objections.

Melissa asked if there was some way to use those facilities to meet our needs in an innovative fashion, maybe a combination of independent living and assisted living. Others suggestions included co-housing, a mix of public and private units, or a combination of public and private ownership. Tom will reach out to Harvey Boshart, from the Select Board, and Sarah Rhatigan, from the Affordable Housing Trust (AFT), to explore ideas and options. Tamilyn Liesenfeld is an attorney who is on the Board of Assessors with John. Tamilyn has held many senior positions in the Assisted Living industry. John will speak to Tamilyn to see if John can get a better picture of what is happening at Wingate.

John pointed out that the bond for Building D is almost paid off. This might give the BSA Enterprise Fund some more financial ability. Also, CPC has the requirement to spend 10% of its money on affordable housing.

Sunrise is on the Select Board's agenda for May 11th. John will email Laurie Bent, Select Board chairperson, about our interest and cc Tom.

For now we need to continue looking into Building E and pursuing Sunrise on parallel paths.

Affordable Housing Trust Update- Tom

There is not much to update since last month. The next AFT meeting is tomorrow, May 5th.

Zero Wellesley Street- Is creeping along with Habitat for Humanity. The guess is that there is a high probability that construction won't start until after 2022. Liz noticed that Habitat is starting community outreach. Habitat will build six units for sale, with a permanent deed restriction that it be affordable. Habitat will likely submit a LIP application to DHCD in the fall.

518 South Ave – Is before the ZBA (Zoning Board of Appeals). It will likely end up in litigation.

751 Boston Post Road – With the neighbors suing, it is in litigation. The development has been stopped and is in court.

Liberty Mutual site- Has been sold to a new developer. They have some proposals on the warrant for our Annual Town Meeting on Saturday, May 15th.

Birch Lane - WAHFI (Weston Affordable Housing Foundation, Inc.) has two houses on Birch Lane donated by Polly Dickson. They plan to tear down these houses and construct two duplexes of three-bedroom units. There will be a vote for one house at next week's Annual Town meeting.

Public Comments

Maybe the June 8th meeting will be in person in the Mary Palmer Room.

Paul Bau asked that if universities can require everyone be vaccinated, can't BSA? Monyette asked if the Fair Housing laws would allow that? Tom referenced HIPAA laws and stated that we are not going to jump into this now. John said it would be good to figure it out. Carol said we could encourage everyone to get vaccinated. Melissa said it was a continuing situation and that people would figure it out. John said Monyette would figure it out. Monyette emphasized that all need to be respectful of the environment and public health, fair housing, etc. Also, she pointed out it is easier to get vaccinated now.

Monyette asked, "Even at 100% what does the CDC want us to do?" What do we do about people coming into the building – family, caregivers, delivery people, etc. Tom suggested that Monyette send a notice to the residents suggesting their caregivers and family members get vaccinated. Monyette said she will discuss the situation with the BOH (Board of Health). BSA still has sign-in sheets and still does the due diligence of cleaning and spraying every morning. Monyette said she will check with the Weston Emergency Reserve Corps (WERC) to get their perspectives on what to do about Covid.

Tom stated that we will revisit this at future meetings.

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, June 08, 2021

Meeting Adjourned: 9:05 a.m.