

Town of Hudson

Municipal Affordable Housing Trust

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Minutes of Meeting May 10, 2023

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kevin Santos at 7:02 PM.

Roll Call: Kevin Santos (Chair), John Parent (Vice Chair), Shawn Sadowski, Jory Tsai, Ian Mazmanian, Darryl Filippi

Staff: Pam Helinek, Kristina Johnson

Packard Street Update and Funding Request

Present: Caitlin Madden, Sharone Small (MetroWest Collaborative Development - MWCD), Eliza Datta (E3 Development)

Executive Assistant Tom Gregory submitted a memo to the Trust offering to reduce the Building Fee (estimated at about \$200,000) by 50% if the Trust votes to do so. This would result in a budget gap of only \$20,000. Caitlin Madden and Sharone Small reviewed the status of the Packard Street project. The issue with equity lender WNC has been resolved. They have worked to find other options for reducing the budget gap, although they do not recommend any of them. The options include lower rent-up costs (\$5000), a smaller solar PV array (\$50,000), concrete curbing instead of granite (\$19,160), and removing the townhouse patios (\$7127).

John Parent thanked MetroWest for doing a great job responding to the Trust's request and said that a reduction of the Building Permit Fee made good sense. He moved to accept the Town's offer to reduce the permit fee by 50% and to provide the remaining \$20,000 of the budget gap from the Affordable Housing Trust fund.

Shawn Sadowski also thanked MWCD for the budget breakdowns but said that he didn't support the 50% permit fee waiver. He would prefer to reduce costs via the options presented by MWCD, with the exception of removing the townhouse patios, and cover the rest of the budget gap from the Trust Fund.

Jory Tsai asked if the Trust could negotiate with the Town to waive the entire Building Permit Fee. Pam Helinek said that the offer was not open for negotiation – the Trust could either approve the 50% waiver or not approve it.

Darryl Filippi said that a Building Fee waiver would set a bad precedent and that other developers would want the same waiver. John Parent said that the request for the fee waiver for a Town-supported affordable housing project would not set a precedent for any other projects, except possibly for other affordable housing developments. Ian Mazmanian said that a waiver would not set a general precedent,

and that even if other developers requested a waiver, the Town would not approve it. Pam Helinek said that Tom Gregory had given very specific reasons in his memo as to why he would grant a waiver for this project, and that it would not set a precedent for other development projects.

Eliza Datta gave two examples of similar projects she had worked on in Somerville and Attleboro where the Towns had granted waivers of Building Permit fees.

Kevin Santos said that the Town formed the Trust for the purpose of creating Affordable Housing and that it has taken many years to finally get to this point. Town Meeting made it clear that clean energy is very important, and the solar array for this project should not be reduced. This is a quasi-public project, and putting in some extra funds and waiving a Town fee does not set a precedent for any other projects.

Ian Mazmanian seconded the motion on the floor to approve the 50% fee waiver and cover the remaining budget gap from Affordable Housing Trust funds. Vote 3-3-0.

Shawn Sadowski moved to reduce the budget gap by \$74,000 by reduction of rent-up costs, replacement of the granite curb with concrete, and reducing the solar array, and covering the remaining \$45,000 budget gap with Trust funds. Second by Darryl Filippi, vote 1-5-0.

Darryl Filippi asked what would happen if the Trust said no to the entire request. Sharone Small said that they would make all of the reductions listed in the presentation and look for other cuts, but that it would set the schedule back which would result in renegotiating the construction contract and the interest rates on the loans. This would likely result in higher costs and a larger budget gap.

Jory Tsai moved to accept the 50% Building Fee waiver and to replace the granite curb with concrete, leaving MWCD with an \$840 budget gap. Second by John Parent, vote 5-1-0.

Housing Production Plan

The Trust received two proposals to update the HPP, one from MWCD and one from VHB. A third from Barrett Planning Group was solicited but not received, despite an initial indication of interest.

The VHB proposal was more expensive. Darryl Filippi had requested hourly billing rates from VHB, since they were not included in the proposal, but they have not yet been received.

John Parent said that MWCD, as our regional housing consultant, was very familiar with Hudson's affordable housing situation and would be a good choice. In addition, their proposal was better written with a good breakdown of tasks, focusing on the sections that are most important to the Trust. Shawn Sadowski agreed that MWCD was a better fit for the project and had a better proposal.

Kevin Santos said that although he agreed MWCD had the better proposal, he was concerned at the appearance that all the Affordable Housing money is going to MWCD and thought maybe it would be better to choose a different consultant. Darryl Filippi agreed that a different perspective might be a good idea. Shawn Sadowski said that he agreed a different perspective was good, but that MWCD had a better proposal than VHB.

The Trust decided to table the discussion while Pam Helinek reached out again to Barrett Planning Group to try to obtain a third proposal.

Meeting Schedule

The Trust agreed on a quarterly schedule of regular meetings which Pam Helinek will post to the Town calendar. Meetings for the next year will be at 7:00 PM on 7/26/23, 10/25/23, 1/24/24, and 4/24/24. The Trust also scheduled a special meeting on June 21, 2023 at 7:30PM to vote on a consultant for the HPP update.

Minutes – April 26, 2023

John Parent moved to approve the minutes from April 26, 2023, second by Darryl Filippi, vote 6-0-0.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be June 21, 2023 at 7:30PM.

Adjournment

John Parent moved to adjourn the meeting, second by Darryl Filippi, vote 6-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.