

**Watertown Housing Partnership  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, May 19, 2015  
Watertown Administration Building**

**Member Attendees**

Fred Reynolds (Chair), Jennifer Van Campen (MWCD), Cliff Cook, Torey Dean, David Leon, Judge Paul Menton, and Andrea Adams

**I. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

**a. Draft Minutes from April 21, 2015**

Mr. Reynolds asked for a motion to approve the draft minutes as presented. Mr. Dean moved to approve the draft April 21, 2015 minutes as presented. Judge Menton seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**II. Saint Joseph Hall: Update on Roof Repair**

Jennifer Van Campen, Director, Metro West Collaborative Development (MWCD), provided the Housing Partnership (Partnership) an update on the status of the roof repairs at St. Joseph Hall. She said there is a temporary patch/fix in place that appears to have stopped the leak. She noted that MWCD had bid out the roof repair, with the assistance of Building Envelope Technologies (BET). Ms. Van Campen said several responses had been received which were still being analyzed, but the cost range for the repair is \$250,000 to \$450,000. She said because of this, MWCD would be seeking input from the Boston Housing and Urban Development (HUD) office to potentially re-open the St. Joseph Hall project relative to HOME funds. Seek an emergency determination from HUD that the units are in danger of being lost. If this is possible, then HOME funds could be used to off-set the cost of the repairs. Ms. Van Campen said she would keep the Partnership apprised of potential cost savings as BET analyzes the bid responses.

The Partnership discussed options, and expressed support for providing at least the \$185,000 previously earmarked from Watertown's funds.

**III. Watertown Housing Authority: Update on Repair of McSherry Gardens Balconies**

Ms. Adams said that Mr. Costello indicated by Email he was at an affordable housing training, and therefore, was unable to attend this meeting. She also noted that he indicated the bidding process for the repairs had been delayed, such that he anticipated an update at the June or July meeting.

Mr. Reynolds recommended postponing this Agenda item to when the bid responses had been received.

**IV. Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing**

Ms. Adams noted that the West Metro HOME Consortium was under a Consent Order with HUD to develop a Regional Analysis of Impediments (AI) for the HOME Consortium. The draft Regional AI was developed by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. She noted many of the municipal strategies in the Regional AI mirror those in Watertown's FY 2013 AI and its January 2014 Housing Production Plan. Ms. Adams said that Newton, as head of the Consortium, was seeking member community support for the Regional AI. Based on this, she suggested the Partnership send a letter of support for the Regional AI.

Mr. Cook moved to endorse a letter of support from the Partnership for the Regional AI. Mr. Dean seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

## **V. Monitoring**

Ms. Adams said the next topic was a combination of a report on monitoring work done for the Town by MWCD and a new attempt by Department of Community Development & Planning staff to update and regularize monitoring, particularly of affordable rental units in Watertown. She noted that most of the affordable units in Watertown are created through the Inclusionary Zoning provisions, so monitoring and thereby ensuring continued affordability of these units is very important. She noted the monitoring conducted by MWCD didn't show significant issues. She noted a letter had been Emailed to the property owner or property manager of record for the affordable Inclusionary Zoning units. She noted the letter offered three options for monitoring: 1) Done by facility in house, 2) Done by a contractor for the facility, or 3) Done by the Town. She said in the case of options #1 or #2, the facility would be required to submit a monitoring report. In the third option, the Town would charge a fee per unit monitored of \$200. This fee is similar to that charged by MWCD for monitoring.

Ms. Van Campen noted that if the affordable units are created through a Comprehensive Permit project, those would automatically be monitored for affordability by the Department of Community Development & Housing (DHCD). Towns are required, however, to affirm at least once a year that Inclusionary Zoning rental units remain compliant with the Regulatory Agreement and Fair Housing Choice requirements. The primary way to do this is monitoring. She urged the Partnership and the Town to establish one system: Pay the Town for monitoring. She noted this would regularize the reporting, and better ensure that all facets of the monitoring were completed: Asset verification, lease review, compliance with Fair Housing requirements, etc.

Ms. Adams said one company that does a fair amount of lottery work, SEB, has been in contact for clarification of certain aspects of the monitoring letter. She acknowledged this was an evolving process, particularly given the turnover in facility staff.

Ms. Van Campen emphasized the Fair Housing aspects of the marketing program were important, especially on re-leasing of an affordable unit. She noted that property managers may skip over potential renters on a Wait List because they don't return phone calls in a day. The problem with this is that some low-income people may have difficulties with their phone bills, so it's important not to just rely on telephone or Email contacts. The companies doing the outreach after the initial lease-up need to be more exhaustive in that outreach, and to show the potential list of renters is current.

## **VI. Project Updates by DCDP Staff**

Ms. Adams noted that 33 Mount Auburn and Howard-Bacon had completed the Special Permit process, and were working on draft Regulatory Agreements with DHCD.

She said Elan/Greystar/Union Market was scheduled to be heard at a Special Planning Board meeting on May 21, 2015, and the Gables/202-204 Arsenal Street had completed the Special Permit process, and the developers were breaking ground for the foundation.

## **Adjourn**

Mr. Reynolds asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Dean moved to adjourn the meeting, and Mr. Cook seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.