

**Watertown Housing Partnership**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, October 21, 2015**  
(Moved Because of Scheduling Conflicts)  
**Watertown Administration Building**

**Members In Attendance**

Fred Reynolds (Chair), Cliff Cook, Brian Costello (Watertown Housing Authority), Judge Paul Menton, Jennifer Van Campen (Metro West Collaborative Development), and Andrea Adams (Senior Planner, Department of Community Development and Planning)

**Others Present**

Lisa Feltner, (Resident) and AmeriCorps Member, (Metro West Collaborative Development)

**I. Approval of Meeting Minutes: Draft Minutes September 15, 2015**

Mr. Reynolds asked for a motion to approve the draft Minutes as presented. Judge Menton moved to approve the draft September 15, 2015 Minutes as presented. Mr. Cook seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**II. De-Leading: Lowell, MA Program as an Example**

Mr. Reynolds said the next order of business was to discuss de-leading. He discussed his conversations with attendees at the recent Home Show, including representatives of the City of Boston's de-leading program. He noted de-leading can be accomplished in two ways: encapsulation or removal. Mr. Reynolds described encapsulation as painting over any areas of the interior of a structure that may have or are confirmed through testing to have certain levels of lead-based paint. The encapsulation paint is a special formulation, and it generally takes two coats to seal in the lead-based paint. He also noted that MassHousing, the State's Affordable Housing lender, offers low-cost financing to homeowners as part of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's *Get the Lead Out Program*. Mr. Reynolds suggested that based on his research concerning current properties for sale in Watertown, the Housing Partnership could decide to use some of its funds to purchase a property, de-lead it and rent it out as an affordable unit. He noted that the Town should also involve the Health Department in publicizing the resources available through MassHousing to remediate lead or other health hazards. Mr. Reynolds suggested use of flyers, public service announcements on Watertown Community Access Television, Emails, postings on the Town website, etc.

Ms. Adams noted that Ms. Rosati, the Health Director, could not attend the Housing Partnership meeting because of a commitment to the Erase the Stigma event dealing with opioid addiction. However, she suggested that she, and perhaps the Health Department staff would be willing to assist the Housing Partnership with the educational/information campaign. She noted the Housing Partnership members would have to create the materials for the campaign.

Mr. Reynolds suggested that the idea of purchasing and de-leading a unit be put before the membership in November for possible action.

**III. Future of the HOME Program**

Ms. Adams updated the Housing Partnership on the status of the HOME program. She noted that the consensus of many individuals working in the HOME program is that it's likely to significantly change in the coming years. The funding for the program on a national level is likely to be drastically reduced, and the program requirements changed.

#### **IV. Other Business**

Mr. Reynolds asked for an update on the St. Joseph Hall roof repairs.

Ms. Van Campen said the loan documents had been signed, and suggested that construction would be underway as early as October 22, 2015. She noted that Metro West Collaborative had selected a bidder such that the final cost was approximately \$350,000. Based on the various funding sources, she suggested that Metro West Collaborative could refund monies to the Town, granted from the Affordable Housing Development Fund.

Mr. Costello asked if the entire roof structure would be removed and re-done?

Ms. Van Campen said yes.

Mr. Reynolds also noted that he had recently attended a Fair Housing training, and noted that to be compliance with Fair Housing marketing requirements, Metro West Collaborative should be sure to include a disclaimer on any advertising or marketing materials for St. Joseph Hall that make it clear the facility is open to persons of all faiths. He said the formal name of the project could still be used, i.e. St. Joseph Hall, but because the name implied or is most closely associates with the Catholic faith, it would be necessary to not be potentially accused of funneling only those of the Catholic faith to the project as potential residents.

Mr. Reynolds also asked if the members had other ideas to create affordable housing?

Ms. Adams distributed a spreadsheet with described the estimated sources and amounts of funds available to the Town for creation of affordable housing. She noted this included Watertown's HOME Funds from the WestMetro HOME Consortium, funds from recent repayments of two American Dream Downpayment Initiative HOME loans, the Affordable Housing Development Fund, and Community Development Block Grant match monies.

Ms. Van Campen distributed a spreadsheet showing some potential options for use of Watertown's HOME funds. She also noted that the spreadsheet includes the Towns of Belmont and Lexington, as Metro West Collaborative does work in surrounding Towns. She noted that Watertown can now only "bank" its HOME funds for a 24 month period, rather than an indefinite period of time, as was the case in prior years. She said the various scenarios outlined in her spreadsheet was based on the needs in each Town, and the amount of money available. For example, Belmont and Lexington have the Community Preservation Act (CPA), so they have more money available to spend on affordable housing, and a regular infusion of money every year.

Mr. Costello suggested that the Housing Authority had 11 Project Based Section 8 Vouchers, and if Metro West Collaborative developed the rental units, the Housing Authority could use its Project Based Vouchers to assist with the cost of the rental units, and manage the property.

Mr. Cook suggested other options for affordable housing, although they would be over a longer term than those suggested by Ms. Van Campen. He said one possible option was to purchase the former North Branch library parcel, remove the building, and market it for affordable housing.

Mr. Cook suggested another long term option would be for Watertown to consider linkage fees, similar to what Cambridge has, to charge retail/commercial projects a set fee to help off-set the added burden

on affordable housing generated by jobs with lower wages, and reduced or no added employee benefits.

Ms. Adams noted the property on which the former North Branch Library site is not currently zoned residential, but suggested an affordable housing option could still be discussed. She also noted another long-term funding source for affordable housing was to consider adoption of the Community Preservation Act.

Mr. Reynolds asked Ms. Van Campen and Mr. Costello to please provide additional information on the housing options for they had discussed, for further discussion at the Housing Partnership's next meeting.

### **Adjourn**

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

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.