

**Watertown Housing Partnership  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, January 19, 2016  
Watertown Administration Building  
Lower Hearing Room**

**Members In Attendance**

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

**Others in Attendance**

Kevin Paul (Videographer from Watertown Cable Access Channel)

**I. Approval of Meeting Minutes: Draft December 10, 2015 Special Meeting**

Mr. Leon noted a correction to the Minutes, relative to his comments about the rationale for recommending a set-aside of 15% for the Regional Mixed Use District (RMUD). He noted his comment related to the fact that the underlying zoning was Industrial, and as such, housing was not allowed in the District. He noted that the set-aside should be set at 15% because the RMUD is supposed to include affordable housing. Mr. Reynolds asked for a motion to approve the draft Minutes as corrected. Mr. Costello moved to approve the draft Minutes as corrected. Mr. Cook seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**II. Annual Action Plan For FY2017**

Mr. Reynolds opened the public meeting on Watertown's Fiscal Year 2017 Annual Action Plan for affordable housing. He asked for public comment on the draft. Hearing none, he asked Ms. Adams to go over the draft Plan.

Ms. Adams noted that the outline of the Plan is provided to each Town in the WestMetro HOME Consortium, which includes Watertown and 13 other surrounding Towns. She noted that once approved by the Housing Partnership, Watertown's section is added to those of the other Towns, and the entire Plan is sent to the Housing and Urban Development regional office in Boston for approval.

Ms. Adams summarized each section of the Plan.

The Partnership discussed Section AP-55 which deals with one year goals for affordable housing production. Ms. Adams noted that as drafted, the one year goal is to create two affordable units, exclusively through the Town's Inclusionary Zoning. She noted that based on the developments that are likely to be heard in the next year, one potential mixed use development on Pleasant Street (WaterMills) has the possibility to create up to 100 housing units. The Partnership members discussed whether or not to increase the one year unit goal from two to a larger number, but ultimately decided to leave the unit number at two.

Mr. Costello addressed Section AP-60, which focused on Public Housing. He said that he would provide Ms. Adams with language to fill in the narrative and answer the four questions posed in the Action Plan form. He said the two major actions planned for FY 2016 for the Housing Authority were: 1) A Request for Proposals to create 11 Project Based Vouchers in Watertown, and 2) Work with the State on a centralized Section 8 Wait List. He said the RFP had been let, and responses were due back in February. Mr. Costello noted the State had allowed three Housing Authorities (Franklin, Newton and Taunton) to act as pilots for a centralized, on-line Wait List. He said having a centralized Wait List would help

streamline administrative functions for Watertown's Housing Authority, as the office staff spends a good part of each day responding to inquiries as to where on the list a person is, and how long the potential wait might be. Mr. Costello also noted that the Housing Authority was on track to complete another \$500,000 of scheduled capital improvements.

Ms. Adams went through the other sections of the draft Annual Action Plan. Mr. Leon recommended that Section AP-85 be amended, by adding coordination with BeaverBrook STEP as a sixth item under question 6 on page 12.

Ms. Adams said that concluded her review of the draft Annual Action Plan.

Mr. Reynolds asked for any additional comments from the audience, or Partnership members. Hearing none, he asked for guidance on next steps.

Ms. Adams noted that Mr. Costello would provide language to address Section AP-60, and based on this, suggested the Partnership entertain a motion to accept the draft as amended, pending receipt of the draft language from Mr. Costello. Once this draft was complete, it would be sent forward to Newton for inclusion in the overall Consortium Annual Action Plan.

Mr. Cook moved to accept the draft Annual Action Plan as amended, and as would be further amended by the inclusion of Mr. Costello's narrative regarding Section AP-60 on Public Housing. Mr. Dean seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

### **III. Regional Mixed Use District**

Mr. Reynolds asked if the members had any other business?

Mr. Leon noted that the Town Council, before the New Year, had been discussing the proposed Regional Mixed Use District (RMUD). He noted that the Partnership had recommended an amendment to the proposed zoning, increasing the affordable housing set-aside percentage in the RMUD from 12.5% to 15.0%. He noted that Mr. Magoon, Director of the Department of Community Development and Planning (DCDP), had provided the Council with a summary of the proposed amendments, along with a recommendation on each. He noted the Council had only gotten through about half of the proposed amendments, many of which dealt with height, setbacks, scale, etc. Mr. Leon noted that with regard to the Partnership's proposed amendment, the recommendation of DCDP was *"while staff agrees with the sentiment to increase affordable housing, we believe that this is a policy that is appropriately applied Town wide, and applying it to only one zoning district could create an unfair advantage in the marketplace."*

The Partnership discussed the proposed amendment, and the recommendation of DCDP staff. Mr. Cook suggested that raising the threshold to 15% in the RMUD would not necessarily disadvantage the developer. He suggested it was more critical that the "rules of the road" be clearly set out. Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Leon agreed with Mr. Cook, suggesting that zoning is about trade-offs.

Ms. Adams said that she would distributed the Memo that Mr. Leon had to the rest of the Partnership, as well as an update on any upcoming Council meetings regarding the RMUD.

Mr. Cook asked if there were any new developments pending that would include housing? Ms. Adams said the only one that is far enough along not to be merely conceptual is a proposed mixed use project

at 330-350 Pleasant Street. She noted that the developer's Community Meeting was scheduled for January 20, 2016 at night at the Police Station.

Mr. Reynolds asked for any other business?

Ms. Van Campen distributed a flyer about an information meeting and community walk on February 6, 2016 as a kickoff to a campaign to enact the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in Watertown. She said the general concept of the CPA would be based on a 2% surcharge, which would cost the average Watertown homeowner approximately \$100 per year. She said this would raise approximately \$1.4 million dollars per year for recreation, open space preservation, historic preservation and affordable housing. Ms. Van Campen noted that this was without the annual State match, which could range from 27% to 100% of the locally raised funds. She also noted the enactment would likely include an exemption for the first \$100,000 of value.

### **Adjourn**

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

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.