

## **Housing Committee**

### **Town of Pelham, MA**

Meeting Minutes: February 19, 2020

Approved: 

#### **Committee Members in Attendance:**

Tilman Lukas, Jim Lumley, Ruth Elcan, Barbara Cooper, Amy Spalding-Fecher, Gail Kenny

**Absent:** none

**Guests in Attendance:** none

#### **Action Items**

- Meeting was called to order at 4:35 p.m.

#### **Votes Taken**

Invoice from SWCA for \$2,300 for environmental review of 8 Amherst Road. Motion to accept by Ruth, seconded by Gail. Approved unanimously.

#### **Committee Discussion Topics**

Committee discussed upcoming meeting with the Community Preservation Committee on February 20. Tilman posted it as a "joint meeting" because the HC plans on attending in support of the \$500,000 request for ABA. Tilman, Amy, and Barbara had attended an earlier Planning Board meeting at which the Planning Board Chair stated the board would be sending a letter to the CPC opposing any funding for the project. The main objection seems to be that ABA "circumvents" zoning. Tilman has previously pointed out that there was no zoning in place for this type of development, so the PB has no role in its approval.

Committee further discussed the impact of ABA on the school. At a previous meeting John Trickey, Finance Committee Chair, stated that the state pays \$5,000 per vacant School Choice slot and there may be 15-20 slots available this year. Cost to the town is approx. \$13,000-\$15,000 per student. Town is already paying for the teachers, heating, upkeep of the school, etc. so impact is not as severe. John would like to avoid having the town borrow funds to make up the difference between available CPC funds and the amount requested. He will meet with Dana McDonald, CPC Chair, to get better information on available funds, and amounts expected each year.

According to information provided by Linda Spink at a recent Planning Board meeting, Pelham is continuing to lose residents at a alarming rate. Who will fill vacant houses? How many are there? If the number of households with school-age children increases, the cost of the school is a bigger problem that the town needs to address.

Committee discussed the comment letter from HC to be sent to DHCD regarding the 40B application for ABA. Jeff Eiseman, Chair of the ZBA, wants all comment letters forwarded to him and he will submit to DHCD. Committee decided to forward the letter to him but also send directly to DHCD.

Currently the Town has 0.5% affordable housing, according to the SHI. Tilman pointed out that this includes one group home for three residents with developmental disabilities. The trailer park in the Village Center does not count as "affordable housing" by state standards. ABA would increase affordable housing in Pelham by 6%, and two Habitat for Humanity Homes would bring the town up to approximately 7%.

HC members discussed preparation for the CPC meeting on 2/20. Note was made that the \$500,000 request from the CPC represents approximately 4% of total project costs and about a \$15,000/unit. The lot at 8 Amherst Rd. received a \$125K contribution from the CPC, for one or two affordable single-family homes. \$500K gives the town 'a big bang for its buck' (i.e. lot of affordability for a relatively small contribution).

Select Board Chair Karen Ribeiro has requested that a member from the HC attend future meetings of Pelham Connect. Karen thought that rotating participants might be worthwhile. Amy offered to attend the next meeting.

The next HC meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2020.

Tilman made a motion for the meeting to adjourn at 6:05 P.M. Jim seconded. Approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

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**References:**

ABA Amethyst Brook Apartments (20-22 Amherst Road)

DHCD MA Dept. of Housing and Community Development

CPC Community Preservation Committee

ZBA Zoning Board of Appeals

PB Planning Board

SHI State Housing Inventory