

**Housing Committee  
Town of Pelham, MA**

Meeting Minutes: February 04, 2020

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

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

APPROVED: 

**Absent:**

**Guests in Attendance:**

John Trickey

**Action Items**

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

**Votes Taken**

Motion to accept minutes of December 20, 2019 by Ruth, seconded by Gail, unanimous.

Motion to accept bid by Clark Construction (see below).

Motion to pay invoice to Valley Community Development (see below).

**Committee Discussion Topics**

Tilman informed committee that the CPC will hold a meeting on 2/20 to discuss the CPC warrant articles. Several HC members attended the CPC meeting on 1/16. One of the articles is a request for \$500,000 for 22 Amherst Road-Amethyst Brook Apartments (ABA). Two CPC members thought that the amount should be reduced to \$400,000. View was that it's a lot of money for a small town and would require borrowing by the town. It would also limit available funding for future affordable projects. There were rumors that there might be another 40B project coming on South Valley Road. The HC has not heard anything about this and questioned if there were any possible locations based on the extensive land study that was previously done.

John Trickey asked the HC how real estate taxes will be assessed for the new project. Tilman explained that typically the developers will meet with the Assessors and negotiate taxes based on a review of the operating budget and what the project can afford. Probably a PILOT (Payment in lieu of taxes) will be negotiated. Preliminary projections indicate that the tax payments may be in the \$30,000+/- range.

John Trickey indicated that the project will affect the school budget. He had heard that there might be anywhere from 20-25 elementary school eligible children in ABA. School currently has approximately 20 vacant school choice slots for which the state pays \$5,000/slot. These

would be lost and the cost per student is higher than that for the town. Tilman will try to get a better sense of the real number of students that might come to the town as a result of the project.

Additional discussion took place between committee members and John regarding changes in the School Choice program that could mean significant more vacancies occurring. This is the first year the school has run significant vacancies. Town resident age is also getting older and very few new houses are being built in town. All of which contribute to the decline. Single family home real estate taxes do not cover the cost to school a child in Pelham.

John Trickey and the HC members discussed play areas for children living in ABA. Possible sidewalks or other safe trails to the Community Building, and how to "incorporate" anywhere up to 60 new residents into the "community". How do you prevent people from being stigmatized as living in the "project"? Committee discussed ways to address these issues.

HC heard that there were ABA abutters that did not know what is going on with the project. Tilman stated that HCD was sending out letters to those families and will schedule meeting with them.

The HC submitted the annual report to the town.

Committee discussed use of emails and what is considered "deliberation". Is it appropriate for chairman to send out report and get individual comments back? Committee will research so as not to violate open meeting law.

Tilman stated that the Select Board has forwarded their letter regarding the 40B comments requested by DHCD. HC will finalize our own letter.

Tilman presented three estimates for the cost of filling the foundation hole at 8 Amherst Road. Clark Construction submitted the lowest price at \$3,200. Committee will add that cost to the loan to Habitat for Humanity. Motion made to approve the Clark estimate made by Barbara, seconded by Ruth, Unanimous.

Tilman submitted and invoice from Valley Community Development Corp. for administrative costs for the First Time Homebuyer Program for \$849.64. Motion made to forward to Town Treasurer for payment by Ruth, seconded by Gail, unanimous.

#### **Other matters:**

#### **Agenda Proposed for Housing Committee Meeting: February 19, 2020**

Review of Dept. of Housing And Community Dev. Site visit  
Draft Pelham Slate article  
Community Preservation Warrant article for 22 Amherst Road  
Committee Representative to Pelham Connect.