



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 6, 2023

Members present:

Kelley Brown, Chair
Kevin McCormick, Vice-Chair
Lee Breckenridge, Member
Amy Dain, Member
Peter Doeringer, Member
Jennifer Molinsky, Member
Barney Heath, *ex officio*

Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

Staff present: Amanda Berman, Director of Housing and Community Development
Shaylyn Davis, Housing Program Manager
Zachery LeMel, Chief of Long-Range Planning
Joseph Iadonisi, Planning Associate

Barney Heath
Director

Planning & Development

Meeting held virtually by Zoom Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Members

Kelley Brown, Chair
Kevin McCormick, Vice Chair
Lee Breckenridge, Member
Amy Dain, Member
Peter Doeringer, Member
Jennifer Molinsky, Member
Barney Heath, *ex officio*
Laxmi Rao, Alternate

1. FY24 HOME-American Rescue Plan Public Hearing

Shaylyn Davis, Newton's Housing Program Manager, briefly explained that Newton, as lead entity of the 13 member West-Metro HOME Consortium has been working closely with Barrett Associates consulting to develop a funding allocation plan for \$5.4 million federal HOME program. Ms. Davis introduced Alexis Lanzillotta from the Barrett Planning Group to give an overview presentation of the allocation plan (attached).

Mr. McCormick asked whether it was the case that only 70% of the rental housing was for the homeless/and or person threatened with homelessness. Ms. Lanzillotta indicated that the consortium set that as a target, but the project funding RFP could set a priority for projects that have a higher percentage prioritized for individuals that are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Mr. Doeringer asked that whatever program are funded be certain to track the races and ethnicity of the beneficiaries. Josephine McNeil asked why, if the plan was aimed at individuals who were disproportionately negatively impacted by COVID-19, there was no mention in the plan. Ms. McNeil also suggest that there be a demographic racial breakdown included for each consortium community.

Bob Van Meter from Brookline CDC expressed dismay for the \$800,000 for administration and that a greater percentage of funds was not available for capacity-building and tenant rental assistance.

Ms. Molinsky asked about whether emergency assistance was considered rather than the plan's emphasis on permanent supportive housing. Ms. Lanzillotta agreed about the immediate need but that the thinking was that permanent units were extremely hard to come by. Ms. Molinsky also supported Ms. McNeil's recommendation that these funds be directed to those most disproportionately impacted. Ms. Berman responded that the clear emphasis of the HOME-ARP funding was to address homeless needs.

Caroline Bays, City Councilor from Watertown, asked about whether funds would be directly allocated to consortium communities. Ms. Berman indicated that the HOME-ARP funding for TBRA (\$300,000) would be allocated via an RFP.

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Mr. Brown asked about the set-aside for administration. Ms. Berman indicated that 15% of the grant was an appropriate amount to administer given the large multi-year grant of this complexity.

Upon a motion by Mr. Doeringer, seconded by Mr. McCormick, both of the public hearing was closed and a recommendation to adopt the plan was approved with a vote of 6-0-1 (Director Heath abstaining).

2. Deliberation/Potential Vote on Rezoning Petitions

- a. Petition #355-22 Request to Rezone 2 parcels (11 Florence Street/318 Boylston Street) to Business Use-4

Director Heath relayed that Attorney Buchbinder has again request that the Florence Street item be postponed to the April Planning Board meeting.

- b. Petition #39-23 Request to Rezone 29 Hunter Street from Multi-Residence 2 to Multi-Residence 3

Director Heath relayed that 29 Hunter Street rezoning item was heard at the joint public hearing with the Land Use Committee. At that meeting, the Land Use Committee voted 8-0 to deny the petition. Ms. Breckenridge moved, seconded by Mr. McCormick to not recommend the rezoning request be granted and it was denied on a vote of 6-0-1 (Director Heath abstaining).

3. Village Center Zoning Continued Discussion

Director Heath introduced Zach LeMel, Chief of Long-Range Planning, and Joseph Iadonisi, our new Planning Associate. Mr. LeMel presented an updated proposed village center rezoning framework in advance of releasing version 2.0 in April (attached presentation).

4. Minutes

The minutes on the February 6 regular Planning Board were approved unanimously 7-0 upon a motion by Mr. Doeringer, seconded by Mr. McCormick.

The minutes of the February 13 joint Zoning and Planning Committee were approved unanimously 7-0 upon a motion by Mr. Doeringer, seconded by Ms. Breckenridge.

The minutes of the February 14th joint Land Use Committee were approved 6-0-1 (Ms. Molinsky abstaining) upon a motion by Mr. Doeringer, seconded by Mr. McCormick.

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned unanimously at 9:45 p.m. upon a motion by Ms. Molinsky.