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# CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

## Newton Housing Partnership

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October 22, 2013

Newton Planning and Development Board  
Newton Community Preservation Committee  
Newton City Hall  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton, MA 02459

Setti D. Warren  
Mayor

Candace Havens  
Director  
Planning & Development

Robert Muollo  
Housing Planner

#### Members

Dan Violi, Chair  
Matt Yarmolinsky,  
Vice-Chair  
Andrew Franklin  
Judy Jacobson  
Phil Herr  
Peter Macero  
Hallie Pinta  
Jeanne Strickland  
Lynne Sweet  
John Wilson

### Re: Support for "Myrtle Village" Project

Dear CPC and Planning and Development Board Members:

At the Newton Housing Partnership meeting on October 9, 2013, the five eligible members present unanimously agreed to support the request by Myrtle Village, LLC. for Community Preservation Act, Community Development Block Grant and HOME funds for the rehabilitation, construction and rental of seven units of affordable housing, including one fully accessible unit, at 12 and 18-20 Curve Street in Newton.

The Partnership's Project Review Committee and then the full Partnership have reviewed and discussed the proposal with Myrtle Village LLC. prior to this action. Our analysis found the proposal to be substantially equivalent in its merits and overall program from our first review in January, 2012. We have concluded that the proposal addresses a number of City priorities and exhibits many of the goals the Partnership seeks projects to achieve, including:

#### *Affordability:*

- The critical need for additional affordable rental housing which is identified as a priority in the City's *Consolidated Plan*.
- At rents affordable to households earning 50%, 70%, and 85% of Area Median Income, the rent structure is targeted for maximum affordability and marketability.

#### *Livability:*

- Providing an accessible, affordable unit where providing such accessibility is not required under the law.
- Consisting of one, two, and three bedroom units, the proposal provides housing opportunities to a variety of household sizes.

#### *Suitability:*

- Utilizing existing housing stock to address the City's housing needs with a design and scale appropriate to the neighborhood with what appears will have minimal negative impact.
- Proximity to the commuter rail, bus lines, public services and amenities.

#### *Feasibility:*

- The proposed project appears financially feasible on the basis of estimated development costs and operating budget.
- The proposed financing is reasonable and total profit and fees appear to be below the established requirements for Comprehensive Permit rental projects.



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*Sustainability:*

- The proposed site plan maximizes open space and landscaping with minimal negative impact on the surrounding environment.
- The proposed construction program proposes to feature energy efficient systems and sustainable materials.

*Development Team:*

The Partnership evaluated the experience of the development team, including: architect, development consultant and property management company, and found them all to have relevant experience and a strong track record.

*Conditions:*

The Partnership recommends the City review and approve the following prior to a financial closing:

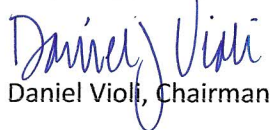
- Plan for property management
- Tenant selection and affirmative fair marketing plans

The Partnership acknowledged the need for public funding, and supports the use of CDBG, HOME and other City resources such as Community Preservation Act funds as needed to support this worthwhile project. The Partnership also particularly commended the project for drawing on the distinctly different, but equally important strengths of two long-standing Newton-based entities: Myrtle Baptist Church and Newton Community Development Foundation. The Partnership also noted that the per-unit public subsidy costs of the development compares quite favorably to many other rental proposals that have been advanced to the Partnership for review and comment.

Further, our recommendation reflects our understanding that one unit will be designed and constructed as meeting the Group 2A accessibility standards of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board regulations, although not required by law. Furthermore, the first floor of the newly constructed units at grade will be designed and constructed to incorporate accessibility features, although not required by law. We recommend that the developer fee be released to the developer on a pro-rata basis upon the issuance of each unit's certificate of occupancy.

In sum, the Partnership recommends the approval of CDBG, HOME and CPA funds for this development. If there are further questions for the Partnership please let me know.

Very truly yours,

  
Daniel Violi, Chairman

Cc     Shelby Robinson, Manager, Myrtle Village, LLC.  
        Robert Muollo, Interim Housing Programs Manager  
        Alice Ingerson, Community Preservation Program Manager  
        Candace Havens, Director

