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Community Preservation Committee

MINUTES

October 5, 2020

The virtual meeting was held online on Monday, October 5, 2020 beginning at 7:00 pm. Community Preservation Committee (CPC) members present included Mark Armstrong, Dan Brody, Eliza Datta, Byron Dunker, Rick Kronish, Susan Lunin, Robert Maloney, and Jennifer Molinsky. Committee Member Martin Smargiassi was not present for this meeting. Community Preservation Program Manager Lara Kritzer were also present and served as recorder.

Present for the Planning and Development Board were Peter Doeringer, Sonia Parisca, Kelley Brown, Barney Heath, Kevin McCormick, Jennifer Molinsky, Sudha Maheshwari, and James Robertson.

Mr. Doeringer opened the Planning Board meeting and announced that the first item would be a joint public hearing with the CPC. Mr. Doeringer introduced the Planning Board Members. Mr. Armstrong then opened the CPC meeting and introduced the CPC members present.

Proposals & Projects

JOINT PUBLIC HEARING on the Newton Housing Authority proposal for additional funding of the Haywood House Project

Newton Housing Authority (NHA) Executive Director Amy Zarechian presented the proposal for additional funding for the new Haywood House Development. Ms. Zarechian explained that the project is adjacent to the Jackson Gardens federal affordable housing development and showed a rendering of the proposed new building. The new development will include 55 new one-bedroom units for seniors with 11 available to those who are below 30% Area Median Income (AMI), 21 units available for households below 60% AMI, and 23 units available for households below 90% AMI. Ms. Zarechian explained that all of the units would be designed to be visitable and adaptable for full accessibility.

Ms. Zarechian reviewed the Housing Authority's staff and commissioners as well as the project's funding awards and sources. It was noted that the project had previously been awarded \$3,000,000 in CPA funds and that the new proposal was for additional funding to address a funding gap created by changes to the design during the approval process. The project's total development cost has risen substantially since the original proposal with construction costs now totaling \$23,640,768. Ms. Zarechian explained that the additional cost was due to the cost of lumber and labor, the affects of the Covid-19 situation, and other project delays. They were now ready to get started on the development and had worked to fine advantageous financing and to value engineer the project to reduce costs as much as possible. The current proposal requests the City's assistance in addressing

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two distinct project costs which were added during the special permit approval process at the request of Newton residents and officials. Ms. Zarechian explained that the project would eliminate an existing, non-accessible ramp leading from Jackson Road to JFK Circle. The City had requested that the project maintain pedestrian access between the two locations and that the new ramp and walkway be made accessible. She showed photos and a site plan to explain the location and design of the new path, which would include both stairs and a ramp system, and explained that this change added \$250,000 to the project which they were hoping to receive CDBG funding to cover. In addition, the City had requested that the property have no vehicular access from Jackson Road. This moved the trash pickup to JFK Circle, which is at a higher elevation than the main floor of the building. This required the project to add a material lift to the building to move the trash receptacles between the main floor and JFK Circle, adding \$77,900 to the project which would be covered by the additional CPA funding. Ms. Zarechian stated that the total request to the City was \$327,900. The NHA planned to close on the project in December in order to begin construction this winter.

Amanda Berman, Director of Housing and Community Development, stated that staff was recommending that the CDBG portion of the request be funded for the purpose of installing the new ramp and stairs. She stated that this work would satisfy a need and goal of the City for architectural access improvements and that staff believed that this is a worthy and appropriate request for additional funding. It was noted that the use of these funds would require amendments to the FY21 consolidated and annual action plans.

Mr. Maloney asked for more information about the components and costs of the project. Ms. Zarechian reviewed the elements of the new pathway that would be covered by the CDBG funding and the costs for the new lift that would be covered by the requested CPA funds. She explained that the original plan for the project had had a driveway and curb cut on Jackson Road. Once that access had been eliminated from the project, the lift became necessary. Ms. Lunin asked why the City did not want a curb cut on Jackson Road. Ms. Zarechian stated that there were concerns about children who walked to school along the Jackson Road sidewalk.

Mr. Armstrong asked about the location of the trash storage and asked if it was in the basement on Jackson Road. Ms. Zarechian reviewed the floor plans and design with members, explaining that a positive aspect of the design changes was that it bought them more common area on the main level of the building, which would be adjacent to JFK circle.

Mr. Brown asked what steps had been taken between discovering the budget gap and the present and asked if the program had changed. Ms. Zarechian stated that they had not changed the program and reviewed their design process. Mr. Brown noted that the change in access had not really changed the design of the building and asked if the NHA had considered other design ideas. Ms. Zarechian explained that they had altered the design of the roof, unit features, and material lift to reduce project costs. She added that the ramp design and construction had come in at a much higher cost than initially expected. Mr. Brown asked if there were any other elements of the project that still needed to be covered. Ms. Zarechian stated that they were still working out the financing of the project and the possibility of NHA assistance to the project but that they had already removed everything that they could from the budget.

Mr. Brown stated that this was a great project and thought that the NHA had made a real effort to reduce costs as much as possible. Ms. Molinsky agreed and asked if there were any other items which still needed to be covered. NHA Commissioner Vincent O'Donnell explained that these projects had been in the program since the start but that they had decided to ask for funding of these items because they aligned with the City's priorities.

Ms. Datta stated that this is a fantastic project and commended the NHA for finding a way to develop a project on their own land. She also thought that the project had a good income mix.

The Chairs opened the discussion to public comment and there was none at this time. Mr. Doeringer closed the Planning Board's public hearing. Mr. Kronish moved to close the CPC's public hearing. Mr. Maloney seconded the motion which passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Armstrong noted that the increase in the percentage of CPA funding in the project was not great and that this was a very good housing project. He did not think that the NHA could do anything more to reduce costs and that these increases are a regular part of development work. Ms. Lunin moved that the CPC recommend that an additional \$77,900 in CPA funding be allocated to the Newton Housing Authority's Haywood House project to cover the purchase and installation of an additional material lift. Mr. Maloney seconded the motion which was unanimously passed by roll call vote.

Mr. Armstrong thanked the Planning Board for organizing this joint meeting. The CPC adjourned their meeting at 7:40 P.M. The Planning Board continued on with their regular meeting at this time.