

Community Housing Committee
March 9, 2004
Minutes

Present: Amy Lepak, Jo-Ann Howe, Jody Kablack, Roger VanDuinen, Mike Fee, Larry O'Brien, JoEllen Samjola

Toby Kramer from the Concord Housing Trust addressed the committee. The CHT was formed as a non-profit corporation (501C(3)) so there would be no need for Town Meeting votes on housing proposals, so they could act quickly and because there would be no public bid requirements. The Trust was an outgrowth of the Concord Housing Alliance (which built and manages 132 units of public housing) and the Affordable Housing Committee, which was an advisory committee formed in the 1980's.

The CHT has excellent membership representation – attorney, developer, architect, and a housing consultant. There are no appointed or elected town officials. This makes them independent, but the Town loses control of the projects that the CHT works on.

They have worked with the town on using town-owned land for housing development. The Town of Concord issues RFP's, and the CHT is typically already well informed of the Town's desires and has been awarded the bid. In one development, they were the only bidder, so the Town re-issued the RFP so there was no conflict. They ultimately won the bid.

They have developed affordable housing using existing zoning bylaws. Their Planned Residential Development bylaw (PRD) allows increases in density if affordable housing is included. This negates the need for a comprehensive permit. Concord also has an Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw which allows 4 units per acre for the affordable units. This bylaw has a buy-out provision, which most developers take advantage of.

The next logical step was to form the Concord Housing Foundation, which holds the housing money they have accumulated, fundraises, educates and produces a newsletter. The CHT focused on homeownership because they have no staff to manage rental units.

Other local housing organizations that Toby mentioned include the Beverly Affordable Housing Coalition. They are not town-related, they have a ½ time Executive Director and they manage rental units.

Toby stated that many local banks are willing to lend \$ for the construction of affordable housing through their Community Reinvestment Act requirements. Other agencies that do construction lending are: MHIC (?), CEDAC (Community Economic Development Action ?), Boston Capital, Mass Housing Partnership. In Sudbury, the Sudbury Foundation may be a source of loan funding.

Toby left us with some information about the Concord Housing Trust and Foundation.

Meeting Schedule: Monday 3/22, 12 noon, DPW Building

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.