TOWN OF MEDFIELD
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Affordable Housing Trust members

FROM: Maria De La Fuente, Director of Land Use and Planning

DATE: September 2nd, 2024

SUBJECT: Memo for the September 5th meeting

Dear Affordable Housing Trust members:

The following is my review of the agenda items for September 5th:

1) **Medfield Housing Authority:** I have not yet received a submission for the proposed 40B Project at Tilden Village. The last discussion I had with their attorney, he had indicated his intent to submit sometime in September, but was still waiting on a Project Eligibility letter by the State.

2) **Group Homes/IDD units:** On August 16, 2024, we had a meeting with The Executive Office of Livable Communities (EOHLC) and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to discuss what potential IDD units on the MSH would look like. The following are my meeting notes--- we focused on the paperwork needed to set up these units in the MSH, and both HLC's and DDS's requirements.

   HLC stated that in most cases, units cannot be restricted to Individuals with Developmental Disabilities ONLY, as that goes against the Fair Housing Act. The units would have to be made available to all disability types. The exception to this is if we're restricting the units to be IDD-only based on some state agency's requirement. Trinity stated that they are happy to keep the units open to all disabilities, and see no need to restrict them to IDD only.

   The Group Home initiative is off the table for MSH, as group homes get licensed through DDS and therefore are ineligible for the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI), which would interfere with Trinity's original proposal and financing. We explained to the State that the IDD units would not be a group home setting---- they would be regular units that happen to serve disabled individuals, in a non-group setting. Still, I thought this was relevant information to include given our long-term goal of having a group home in Medfield.

DDS asked us to clarify what we mean by IDD, and whose definition we are using. In their world, IDD is "for intellectual disabilities, usually autism, and developmental disabilities". "People with a disability" covers "blindness, deafness, mental health, and developmental issues".

DDS went on to say that it is better if we stay off group homes for disabled individuals---while there is a great need in the State of Massachusetts, the licensing for these developments is very complex, and the MSH project is complex on its own. That being said, DDS does have many individuals who live in their own housing units who are fairly independent—DDS staff checks in periodically, but they don't play an active caretaker role.

DDS explained that, if a person lives on their own, DDS is not included in the licensing process. But, residential support could be needed, such as to sign a lease for adult long-term care, arranging for rent payments, etc.—if DDS funds are being spent, then DDS will need to license the facility. If an individual can sign their own lease or have their family sign the lease for them, then DDS is not involved.

The location of these units would need to be inclusive—the units cannot be clustered in their own complex.

DDS also mentioned they have Service Coordinators, which are funded by DDS, but the units themselves are not licenses. In cases where an individual needs DDS assistance, DDS can help with the first and last rent deposit, but they do not pay rent for the individual on a regular basis. To get a DDS Service Coordinator, an individual would need to be a DDS client first. MassHousing would be open to providing information and resources on this.

Trinity stated that they would like to have housing that Framingham Advocates clients could use, people who are already in the DDS system. The State agencies mentioned the 3% program run by MassHousing (click here for additional information Newton researched on it). Whether this program could be used in the MSH was not clear to me--- my impression was perhaps not, because the units would not go through a lottery as is required by the program—they would go through direct applications.

The meeting did not end in a clear consensus of next steps, and Framingham Advocates was not able to attend. I have been meaning to touch base with Trinity on this matter, but our lead contract is moving out of State and no longer works for Trinity Financial. I expect Trinity will need some time to regroup and adjust.

Newton can provide additional information on this meeting.

3) **Habitat for Humanity:** Kerry and I met with Habitat and our Town Administrator, Kristine Trierweiler, to discuss potential next steps. We're still looking at 17 Surrey Run and the unnumbered property next to it, also owned by the Town. Kristine said the next steps are to meet with the neighborhood on-site and explain to them what we're trying to accomplish, reassure them of any concerns they may have, and listen to their feedback.

One we meet with neighbors; we can get this on an upcoming Select Board agenda to start the discussion of selling the land at the next Town Meeting.

As of now, I am trying to coordinate the neighborhood meeting for the week of September 23rd. Kerry and a Habitat points person have indicated their availability, but I'm awaiting confirmation from other stakeholders.

Kerry can give you additional updates.

4) **State Hospital:** No updates at this time other than Amanda Alberda leaving Trinity. We're expecting a Site Plan application towards the end of the year, but I don't have additional information at this time.

5) **441 Main St update:** The 8-unit 40B has been approved by the Zoning Board! The person who runs the SHI is currently on vacation, but I am waiting for her to return to the office to let her know of the approval so we can count these units towards our 10%. After this project gets counted, we'll be 25 units short.

6) **Housing Bond Bill Status update:** This is just a friendly reminder that I circulated some documents on the newly approved Housing Bond Bill, which you can find here and here. My main point of interest is the fact that in-law apartments (or Accessory Dwelling Units, "ADU"s) will now be allowed as of right in residential districts. This means that they can now be allowed through a building permit only, cannot be limited to family members, and this may apply to both attached and detached units (think detached garage turned apartment). I attended a legal webinar last week to learn more, and the head of HLC said they are working hard on putting together some regulations and FAQs.

   As an FYI, our current bylaw allows ADUs through a discretionary special permit (3 month process, and $600 in application and legal fees). I have personally yet to see the ZBA deny an ADU permit, but this is a lengthy process. Our current bylaw also restricts the units to family members only.

   As it relates to Medfield, our current bylaw will become obsolete on February 2, 2025, 180 days after the bill was signed into law. The Planning Board will be writing a new, compliant ADU bylaw to propose at the Spring Town Meeting. My goal is to allow ADUs as if they were housing additions—so if they comply with our regular zoning requirements, then they're allowed through a building permit, but if they make the property more nonconforming, then a special permit or a variance is needed, same as any other project. I'm currently awaiting additional guidance from the State before I start drafting this new bylaw.

   As it relates to the AHT, while this is not an affordable housing matter, this might increase the number of housing units in Massachusetts and might help our current housing crisis.

   Please refer to the aforementioned documents for additional information on all Housing Bond Bill items.

7) **Declaration of Trust:** Last but not least, this is just an administrative update on my end—I'm waiting on the requested documents to be sent to me regarding the AHT's questions as it pertains to the structure of the loan to Trinity. I'm also hoping Lisa Mead, external Counsel, can join us at out October meeting so AHT members can ask live questions before signing the Declaration of Trust. Please note this is NOT on the agenda, as we have nothing substantive to discuss yet while we wait for those documents.

8) **Additional reading:** Newton circulated this interesting articles about why too few homes get built--- you can read it here!

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me at mdelafuente@medfield.net or by phone at (508) 906-3027.

Maria De La Fuente