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## **Burlington Housing Partnership Committee**

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### **Meeting Minutes**

January 24, 2023, via Webex

**Committee Members Present:** Kerry Donahue (KD), Chair  
Eileen Sickler (ES), Vice-Chair  
Henry Wu (HW), Secretary  
Michael Runyan (MR)  
Rita Shah (RS)

**Committee Members Not Present:** Toni Ann Natola (TN)

**Other Attendees:** Drew Merrill (DM), Shari Ellis (SE), Barbara L'Heureux (BL),  
Christine Shruhan (CS)

- KD called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.
- **Burlington Youth and Family Services** – Christine Shruhan (Burlington Youth and Family Services) discussed with the Committee regarding the two year \$700K federal grant that the BYFS was able get for helping with teen (17 – 25 year old) that homeless or on verge of homelessness. BYFS is in the process of hiring staff to help execute the grant and have received nine applications to date. CS also mentioned that BYFS had someone stop by because the person had received a 10-day quit notice for an apartment in Burlington. ES asked if the grant received was only to help with Burlington residences. CS stated it was and can be used to help teens get out of home situation where there may be physical or sexual violence. ES asked whether BYFS is working with the Burlington High School (BHS) regarding the grant. CS stated that when BYFS was preparing to apply for the grant, they reached out to the school's youth homelessness counselor to see if BHS was aware of any of the student body that would benefit from the grant aid. BYFS was able to ascertain that there were about nine students that the grant would be able to help. ES asked if there were any monitoring of the aid recipients to ensure that there is no abuse of the funds received where a person receives aid for an apartment and later there are multiple people living with the recipient and are disruptive with partying. CS responded that it is recognized that these situations may arise, but this kind of abuse doesn't immediately terminate the aid and that there may need to be a process to ensure these kinds of abuses doesn't happen.

MR asked if BYFS has reached out to property managers in Burlington regarding the program since they may be reluctant to rent to this age group and background. CS stated that they have

started outreach through the chamber and getting its support. CS further stated that the aid would be similar to the State's housing vouchers and the property managers would know that the aid is for two years and will also cover any damage to property. CS also stated that the grant does not restrict the recipients to be housed in Burlington. KD asked if there is a limit to the length of time for receiving aid. CS answered the maximum length of time is two years.

KD asked how the BHPC can help make people aware of the services the BYFS provides. CS answered that they are in the process of putting together a list of services and resources available through the BYFS and plan on posting it on their website in about a month. She stated that it would be helpful if BHPC's website have a link to that BYFS webpage.

CS also mentioned that if Burlington has success with the grant, and that as long as the Federal grant program is around, Burlington will continue to receive grant money. KD asked which agency is the grant coming from. CS stated it was from HUD. ES asked how HUD will determine if the grant program is successful. CS stated that it is a new grant so there is some learning to determine what success is and believes that as long as Burlington can achieve 50% to 70% of its goals for the grant, it would be determined as being successful. KD asked the name of the grant. CS stated it is the Youth Homeless Prevention Project.

- **Housing Production Plan** – Discussion on Housing Production Plan (HPP) presentation conducted by MAPC on 10 January 2023 centered around the next steps to effectuate a HPP and the cost/benefits associated with it. With the completion of the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), the first step of the HPP is done but the other parts of the HPP and how to go about accomplishing it becomes more challenging. There were a lot of interaction with the Town planner during the conduct of the HNA and in conducting a HPP, the Town planner and Planning Board will need to be even more involved. BL stated that if BHPC goes forward with the HPP, there need to be a lot of coordination with the Town Planning Board to ensure that the two parties do not put forth competing and conflicting plans. The Planning Board initiative is trying to identify suitable areas within the town for multiple-family housing as well as affordable housing. BL stated that the two parties have been working together in the past in achieving these goals for housing and need to continue close coordination of its respective efforts.

On a related subject matter, BL requested wording change to the BHPC webpage post on the Northwest Park affordable housing. Current wording seems to discourage seniors to apply for the affordable units. BL recommended that wordings be revised to be age-neutral. BL stated that the original intent was for targeting seniors but recognized that it can't be legally done. BL recommended that the post be revised to the original BHPC language on Northwest Park. KD agreed to make the change.

Resuming discussion on the HPP, MR stated that Town Meeting does not have the appetite to support the Housing Trust at this time. MR noted that the Town Planning Department and Town Planning Board's effort on the MBTA Communities Plan, and that the HPP would need close coordination with the MBTA Communities Plan efforts. MR thought the HPP would be helpful to have but questioned whether anyone would utilize it. usually more strategic and targeted that are focused on a specific timeframe. AK stated the example HPPs in the presentation all had their strategies implemented. HPPs are designed to look at the near future

unlike a Master Plan that looks long term. ES concurred that a Housing Trust would be difficult to gain Town Meeting approval. ES emphasized that the HPP needs to be clear on its goals and not simply be a plan on identifying where to put affordable housing. It should address sustainability, improving of neighborhoods, and connecting of the various neighborhoods/districts to make it more walkable. ES also questioned whether Town Meeting would be willing to spend another \$50K - \$60K for another report that may not be used. MR stated that he believes it is at least important to identify potential sites or under-utilized sites that can serve housing needs in the future. KD questioned whether it would be better to let the MBTA Communities Plan get completed before determination on proceeding the HPP. DM noted that Alex Koppelman had stated that having a HPP may lead Burlington to qualify for other State grants. BL emphasized that the Town is not just doing the MBTA Communities Plan which would not require Burlington to have additional affordable housing since Burlington already meet the minimum requirements. Burlington wants to take a holistic approach to identifying where multi-family housing would be welcomed and where people would want to live.

SE noted that, although the HPP would be of benefit and open up opportunities for other grants, the planning staff is very limited and resources to support the HPP would be difficult. BL responded that Town Planning Board has made identifying appropriate areas in town to develop zoning plans that encourage multi-family housing. BL also stated that there are plans to bring forth to Town Meeting to change the definition of multi-family housing so that it just does not refer to large apartment complexes but also include smaller scale multi-family developments such as townhouses and two/three/four family units. ES asked BL whether it would make sense to have MAPC work with Town Planner and the Town Planning Board on its efforts. BL stated that she believes that they will be reaching out to MAPC and also having BHPC involved.

KD concluded discussions by stating that she would like to see what aspect of the Housing Production Plan is not being covered by the various on-going efforts by Town Planning Department before determining whether the HPP is worth conducting and if so, when should the HPP be undertaken.

- **Grandview Farms** – DM provided update on Grandview Farms units. DM is working on marketing material for the two available units. DM is working John Danizio regarding sending of e-mails to perspective applicants and placement of flyers advertising the units and applications. MR stated that typically with physical copies, these were placed at the town library, and with the Council on Aging. DM shared his list for outreach and pointed out posting of flyers at apartment complexes will be difficult due to access. RS suggested that DM e-mail the flyers to the managers of apartment complexes to have them post within complex bulletin boards. ES suggested also advertising with the Minuteman Senior Services.

KD noted that the application period opened on week of 22 January 2023 and closes on 13 February 2023. KD asked DM if he has access to pictures of the units that John Danizio too. DM responded that he has one picture from the town website that was used. If there were more pictures available and/or better pictures, he would post it in place of the picture that is currently used. KD stated that the pictures on the town website are not of the actual available units. DM stated that he would look into getting actual unit pictures.

KD asked DM to confirm that people who applied for the previously available unit will need to reapply for these units if interested. DM affirmed that new applications have to be submitted since we are now utilizing a lottery approach and that interested applicants still have to be verified as eligible for the units via the lottery.

- **119 S. Bedford** – DM reported that the RFP for renovations is being published in the central registry on 1 February 2023 with responses due 14 February 2023.
- **Minutes** – RS made motion to approve the 10 January 2023 meeting minutes. MR seconded the motion. KD, ES, MR, RS, and HW all voted “Yea”. The 10 January 2023 minutes were approved 5-0-0.
- **Next Meeting** – the next meeting will be on 21 Feb 2023 at 5:00 PM.
- **Adjourned** – the meeting was adjourned at 6:11 pm.
- **Minutes Approved** – On 21 February 2023, MR made motion to approve the 24 January 2023 meeting minutes. ES seconded the motion. KD, ES, MR, and HW all voted “Yea”. TN abstained. The 24 January 2023 minutes were approved 4-0-1.

- **Respectfully Submitted,**

Henry Wu, Secretary