

Boxborough Housing Board
Minutes of Wednesday, **May 3, 2023**, meeting
In-person, Town Hall Boxborough MA 01719

Housing Board Members Present: Al Murphy, Chair; Channing Wagg, Vice Chair; Diane Friedman, Jessie Robinson, Korinne Stephens, Ron Vogel

Invited Attendees present: Becky Neville

Guests: Hugh Fortmiller

A quorum being present, Chair Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m.

I. Informational Items

Chair Murphy reviewed a meeting with Metro West attended by himself and members Robinson and Wagg regarding the sourcing and compilation of various data about household incomes together with head of household ages to better assess the need for low-cost, affordable housing in the town. There ensued a discussion about various aspects of the meeting, including obtaining similar data pertaining to surrounding towns and counties.

In a somewhat ancillary category, Chair Murphy distributed and commented upon several annual town meeting articles that had a bearing upon Housing-Board initiatives and programs. The need for greater coordination of objectives was discussed.

II. Minutes

The minutes of the April 13, 2023, meeting were reviewed and a motion made and seconded to accept. A typographical error was identified. The minutes were accepted with the correction.

III. Old Business

A. Affordable Housing at 70-72 Stow Road

Citing recent *Boston Globe* articles and editorial commentary, Chair Murphy offered some thoughts and opinions on alternative uses to the land parcel in question to meet perceived low-cost affordable housing in town. These ranged from building rental housing to monetizing the property and using the funds to “rehab” existing garden apartment units thus creating such units at perhaps a lower unit cost. There ensued a discussion encompassing a number of thoughts and opinions. It was pointed out that a two-bedroom unit at Paddock Estates rented for ~\$2480/month. It was agreed that the above referenced household data was needed to form the basis of a reasonable strategy going forward.

B. Boxborough Affordable Housing Preservation Program

Chair Murphy began the discussion with a review of member Stephen’s draft document (entitled H.O.P.E. program) including an application form. Several points were noted and discussed. There was an extensive review of the nomenclature pertaining to condominium units and home-owner association units, including definitions and varying owners’ responsibilities according to same. It was decided that member Stephens would re-draft the document to encompass the points brought up and concerns discussed.

C. Boxborough Rental Assistance Program (BRAP)

Chair Murphy reported that the program was operating in accordance with its goals.

D. Boxborough Emergency Assistance Program

Chair Murphy reported that the program was operating in accordance with its goals.

E. Discount rates, resale value and property taxes at Boxborough Meadows

Chair Murphy opened the discussion by reviewing an analysis he had prepared based on data obtained from town assessment records amplified with data provided by member Stephens. The focus was on the “discount rate,” of each individual affordable unit. This discount rate being the ratio of its selling price, all were sold for \$116,500, to the market price of comparable unit/s at the time of sale.

In reviewing the twelve units’ discount rates, variations were identified that to date have not been accounted for but appear to be due to variations in the selections of comparable units’ selling prices used as the denominator in the above referenced ratio. There ensued considerable discussion as to how to proceed with this information/situation. It was decided that member Stephens would research town archives for the original computations. Further discussion and potential action were deferred until the result of this action was reported.

IV. New Business

A. Safety-related funding request

A request for reimbursement of the annual maintenance expenses pertaining to the filtration system was brought forward. The filtration system was necessitated by uranium contamination in the affordable unit’s well. A firm estimate of \$1,735.95 was presented. During the ensuing discussion, it was suggested that since it would be an annual expense that a sum covering an estimated three years be authorized for reimbursement of that period. It was decided by vote to instead request a disbursement of the above referenced sum from the Boxborough Affordable Housing Trust for the purpose of reimbursement.

V. Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded for adjournment and the meeting closed at 9:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by meeting secretary, vice-chair Channing Wagg

VI. List of Documents/Exhibits Used

1. List of ATM articles of interest
2. Draft of BHB minutes for 4/13/2023.
3. Draft of HOPE program plan
4. Summary of valuations at Boxborough Meadows
5. Quote for-maintenance of water system