
AMHERST MUNICIPAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST
Special Meeting for RFP Review
PUBLIC MEETING
Tuesday, June 1, 2021
7:00 PM

Virtual Zoom Meeting. Video recording available at: [LINK](#)

IN ATTENDANCE

Trust Members: Allegra Clark, Rob Crowner, Sid Fierra, John Hornik (Chair), Carol Lewis, Erica Piedade, Will Van Heuvlan (6)

Absent: Paul Bockelman, Francis Goyes Flor (2)

Staff: Nate Malloy, Rita Farell, John Page

Guests: Council Liason Dorothy Pam, Former Trust Member Tom Kegelman, and Member of the Public Maura Keene.

Prepared by John Page.

Meeting called to order at 7:05PM.

Trust members reviewed the draft RFP that included staff changes section by section highlighting new recommendations by staff. Comments were as follows:

- New Two-Step Process / Letters of Intent
 - John noted the new two-step process to gauge interest. The first step being a submission of a letter of intent within 30 days of the RFP's release. If the Town does not get responses, we can go back and modify the RFP for re-release.
 - Carol asked that staff make sure comparative criteria matches completely with the updated RFP.
 - John posed what happens if we only get one letter of intent? Would the Town be ok with that? Similarly, Carol asked how does that comparative criterion if there's just one applicant. Rita clarified that you do not have to accept the applicant just because there is just one applicant, and they met the minimum criteria.
 - John asked whether it is a matter of public matter how many people submitted a letter of intent.
 - Carol remembering that bidder questions went unanswered, asked if there is any different process this time around. Nate explained Procurement Officer Anthony Delany is the clearing house and he will direct the questions to the right person.

- Prioritization of Historic Structure
 - Nate noted that Paul has requested that preserving the school remain a priority.
 - Carol asked if the structures on the Belchertown Road are historically significant and whether a demolition delay from the Historical Commission could delay development? On Belchertown Road, Nate explained, the developer can make the decision about reuse including the possibility of moving at least one of existing houses.
 - John pointed out that requiring that the building be reused and incorporated into the plans, recognizing the challenge, was the largest impetus for the two-step letter of intent process.
 - Rob and Carol expressed concern that requiring the school is going to eliminate possibilities. What if there was a fabulous plan but it required demolition of the East Street School, they posed. They feared wasting time and ending up with a potentially inferior product.
 - John noted that he did reach out to Way Finders, Home City Housing, and Valley they did not think making this a requirement was a good idea. John was comfortable proceeding with the letters of intent process and see what happens.
- Sustainability & Design Standards:
 - Nate noted new additions to energy efficiency/design standards. Erica asked if this was meeting passive house standards? Nate said it was unlikely to meet passive house standards but that these industry standards were quite stringent and draw directly from DHCD's Qualified Action Plan (QAP) design standards. John noted that as discussed in our sustainability and affordable housing, we don't want to build a building that is obsolete in five years and hinders our community from reaching our climate goals.
 - John question the removal of covered outdoor bike racks. Nate noted that building those becomes a structure which is something that now needs to be lit and permitted. John argued it is preferred amenities so the RFP should ask for it. Sid shared about both bike storage and bike racks at the University.
 - Carol offered the language change that storage *and* bike racks be offered.
- Management Office and Community Space Requirements
 - Onsite management office is optional un latest draft. RFP suggests that even one of the houses on the Belchertown Road property could be an office.
 - Allegra expressed that ideally there is a community room in both buildings and office/space for services in at least one of the two buildings. She underscored the importance of a community room then where is the space for community building and strong relationships.
 - John suggested compromise language that at least one office be included between the two sites even if they had an office in the Town. Reworded as "The development must include one on-site management office."
 - Community room requirement changed to "ideally both sites will include a community room." John suggested requiring at least one community room between the two sites – which is accessible to both.

- Erica too underscored the importance of a community room noting that for the mixed-income population we expect, we want to support the cultivation of a community feel.
- Miscellaneous:
 - Still requiring the minimum of 40 affordable units between both sites. The distribution is left up to the developer.
 - Bedroom mix stayed the same.
 - 99-year ground lease to the developers remained the same.
 - Staff clarified the terms of land development agreement (LDA).
 - Clarification was provided in the RFP around the use of CPA funds and the restrictions that imposes on development of the Belchertown Road site.
 - Additional funding sources listed as CPA funds and tax incentive financing.
 - Nate noted the footnote on gas hookups mentioning the natural gas moratorium.

Vote last meeting to accept the prior draft. Vote on the draft revised by staff:

- Erica motions, Side seconds: Erica-Yes, Rob- Yes, Will – Yes, Allegra- Yes, Sid- Yes, Carol – Yes. John – Yes. Passes.

Closing John asked staff when will the RFP is scheduled to go public. Erica reminded the group that the RFP Drafting Working Group's goal was by the end of June. Nate will check on lead times and report back at the next meeting of the Trust.