

DRACUT HOUSING AUTHORITY AND BOARD OF SELECTMAN

HOUSING SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING

MARCH 24, 2014

12:30 P.M.

PRESENT: Brian Bond, Debbie DeWitt Ahern, Joseph DiRocco, Robert Cox

IN ATTENDANCE: Mary T. Karabatsos, Phil Thibault, Kelley Szymanski

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Mary Karabatsos gave the Housing Sub Committee a site feasibility study that was done on the Lakeview Avenue Site by GCG Associates. This study took place in 2011. The study shows a few options on how many units we would be able to put on the site. The cost of the site work came in at \$554,533.82. The Director also stated that there is ledge on the site and that this number reflects the work to be done on the ledge. The Director stated that as of three years ago this number was a pretty good estimate as to what it would cost to prepare the site. The site survey would have to be updated. There is also an old barn on the property that does include asbestos and the cost of demolishing that building is \$25,000. At the time CPC paid for the cost of the study back in 2011. The survey is the just the cost of the infrastructure but there are no construction numbers built in.

Selectman DiRocco stated that he believes that we would be looking at 12 – 13 units of senior housing. Commissioner DeWitt Ahern stated that yes we are not looking at a mix used project. Whether it is on Lakeview Avenue or the Richardson Property the housing authority is interested in building senior housing. If we did move forward with putting 13 units on the Lakeview Property we would need \$3,000,000 from CPC and a mortgage of \$783,000. Selectman Cox stated that that sounds doable. He went on to say that he did not get a “warm and fuzzy” feeling from CPC when we went to their meeting to request funds for the Richardson Property.

Commissioner Bond stated that he approached Joe DiRocco and said that if he is so adamant about looking at the Lakeview property than we should look at it. Commissioner Bond stated that he is still behind the Richardson Property but is willing to explore the Lakeview Avenue property. Commissioner Bond stated that there are some issues with the Lakeview Avenue, such as; zoning, set-backs, small piece of property, neighborhood input, etc.... He stated that there are some hurdles on this site as well. Selectman DiRocco said that he cannot support the Richardson Property. He stated that the Richardson Property will always be there and the housing authority will have time in the future to build there. Commissioner Bond stated that he believed that the Lakeview Avenue property will always be there too. He stated that whatever direction we go in let’s move forward to go to Town Meeting in November. There has to be some sort of work in progress and then a judgment call to see which way we will go. Selectman Cox believes that development on the Lakeview Avenue property seems to be the most logical based on the time frame. Selectman Cox believed that there were too many ifs in regards to the Richardson Property. No one was sure where the money would be coming from or if we would even get the money. Selectman DiRocco stated that the Women’s Institute stated that the process on the

Richardson Property could take 4 – 6 years. Selectman DiRocco stated that if he wanted to see something happen for the seniors within the next two years, it would not be Richardson Property but it is possible at the Lakeview Avenue site. Selectman DiRocco stated that there are some high numbers at the Richardson Property site such as; wetlands, installation of a road, etc... Commissioner Bond stated that the numbers for site work at the Lakeview Avenue site are also high. Commissioner Bond stated that he did not want to get into a debate, if we are going to look at the Lakeview Avenue site then let's look at it.

Phil Thibault stated that as far as efficiency it would make sense to do it as a single building, rather than separate units. He stated that as a single building it becomes more efficient. He also stated that in lieu of an elevator there is the possibility that the building could be built into the landscape with top floor access coming from the top of the site. This would eliminate the need for an elevator. Selectman DiRocco asked if we can put 13 units on the site with enough parking. That is what we need to find out.

Selectman Cox stated that he is all for the Lakeview Avenue site and would be happy to go to CPC and lobby for this money. Selectman DiRocco thinks that CPC would fund a project that will happen sooner than later. Selectman DiRocco wants to get this done. The Director stated that we will need more money for an updated study. Commissioner DeWitt Ahern inquired about having the property deeded back to the housing authority. Selectman DiRocco believes there would not be an issue deeding this property back to the housing authority.

Commissioner Bond asked about the concern of the neighbors. He stated that it is a small area with homes all around it. Selectman DiRocco stated that we have a process to go through. Commissioner DeWitt Ahern stated that if this project is going to happen soon than we need to move forward. Commissioner Bond stated that if we build 13 units on Lakeview Avenue or 13 units on the Richardson Property, the costs are the same and we would not need funding from the state for either site. Selectman Cox stated that he would go on record to state that he will not support the Richardson Property, at least not at this time. He feels as if there are too many "ifs". Commissioner Bond inquired about the \$900,000 that was used to purchase the property. Commissioner Bond stated that the cost of the site work at Lakeview Avenue is \$554,000 and the cost of the site work at Richardson Property is less than \$500,000. The cost of construction of 13 units at both sites is the same also. Selectman Cox stated that it was sold to Town Meeting that there would be construction of 48 – 60 units of housing on the Richardson site and that is not what is happening. Selectman Cox stated that if we have to wait for a more opportune time to get more units on the Richardson site then that is what should be done. Selectman Cox stated that we all want to get additional senior housing. Selectman Cox stated that let's see what information the Director can get from the engineer and then meet again to discuss.

The Director stated that the Housing Authority Board would have to vote to decide which scenario they would like to see move forward.