

Westport Affordable Housing Trust Fund

Executive Session Minutes - May 22, 2019
at Westport Town Hall

Present: Chair Liz Collins (LC), Henry Lanier (HL), James Sabra (JS), David West (DW); Housing Specialist Leonardi Aray (LA), recording clerk Robert Barboza.

During the regular meeting of the Westport Affordable Housing Trust on May 22, 2019, Chair Liz Collins asked for a motion to enter into executive session under the provisions of Mass. General Laws Chapter 30A, Section 21, to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property by the Trust, declaring that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Trust.

HL made a motion at 4:25 p.m. to enter into executive session under the provisions of Mass. General Laws Chapter 30A, Section 21, to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property by the Trust, and to not reconvene in public session. The motion was seconded by JS; the vote was 4-0 in favor – DW aye, JS aye, HL aye, LC aye.

Housing Specialist Leonardi Aray made a presentation on a 5.3 parcel of land on Sodom Road, Assessors Map 59-5-1, being considered for release from the Chapter 61A tax program, listed for sale at \$125,000, and suitable for construction of a duplex home. The land was the subject of a \$119,000 purchase offer by the Trust on May 10, 2019, authorized at the last meeting. The chair accepted a counter offer of \$122,000, subject to the trust's final approval of the purchase and sale agreement at a later date.

LA presented his estimates of likely development costs for either a duplex or a single family home on the site, and calculations of probable funding gaps for the construction of either option. His recommendation was that development of plans for a duplex to be offered to applicants earning up to 60 percent of the area median income (AMI) would be the best option for the Trust.

DW urged consideration of scaling back plans for three bedroom units of approximately 1,500 square feet in favor of offering more amenities such as front porches or rear decks to potential buyers. JS wanted assurances that the Conservation Commission had endorsed duplex plans and issued an order of conditions for the property; he also suggested that the Trust was offering too much for the land considering the high site costs to be encountered; and urged that LA get confirmation from the Zoning Enforcement Officer that a duplex was allowed under current zoning. JS also expressed doubts that a private developer would be interested in the project because of the funding gap.

LA noted the parcel was the largest of the Sodom Road lots being offered for sale, and the only one suitable for a duplex. He agreed that a non-profit entity was more likely to respond to a request for development proposals, as they encourage sweat equity investments by buyers to help cut funding gaps in such situations. After some further discussion, JS made a motion to enter into a purchase and sale agreement reviewed by legal counsel for Lot #15, Sodom Road, with the Trust to ratify the agreement after LA completes due diligence on development options. The motion was seconded by DW, and passed 4-0: DW aye, JS aye, HL aye, and LC aye.

JS made a motion to close the executive session and adjourn the meeting at 5:15 p.m., seconded by HL. The vote was 4-0 in favor.