

LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP AFFORDABLE HOUSING BOARD
Regular Meeting
Thursday, March 23, 2017

Present: Peter Ferrone
Kevin VanHise
Jean Washington
Murali Mallampati
Andrew Meltzer

Absent: Jessica Ann Clifford

Excused Absence: Susan McCloskey

Also Present: Christopher Bobbitt, Council Liaison
Andrew Link, Liaison
Susan Snook, Secretary

Statement of Adequate Notice:

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meeting Act, N.J.R.S. 10:4-10, specifying the date, time and place of the meeting.

Minutes:

The February 23, 2017 minutes were unanimously approved.

Public Participation (for items not on agenda):

None

Township Actions:

Mr. Link gave a brief summary of the following units that the Township has purchased in foreclosures:

- 301 Talon Court – we had an offer on it, we accepted; however, the person withdrew the offer and we had another buyer and they could not get a mortgage and now the original buyer is back in the mix and we are in the process of having a Council resolution on the next agenda to sell it to him.
- 1319 Colts Circle – under contract and she is still working on a mortgage
- 34 Chamberlin Court – is a unit that needs excessive rehabilitation and we had to re-bid that one because the first bid in realizing that it had to be made clear that it was a prevailing wage job because the Township owns that unit and we had to re-bid that language in the bid.

Housing Rehabilitation Program:

Mr. Link stated there is nothing new to report.

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Updated Status of Changes at State Level:

Chairperson VanHise stated more of the same. The trial is on-going and concluded the testimony, Fair Share Housing Experts, David Kinsley, last week. They are actually behind and the Court wanted to have trial on the perspective needs, the next ten year period conclude yesterday; but they are actually behind because there are more witnesses and have added more dates.

In May they are hoping to have the expanded need portion of the trial and again hopes to conclude by the end of June and it is anticipated that it will be longer. There are still five municipalities in Mercer that are carrying the burden of the State with settlement discussions. The only thing that is progressing right now is Berkeley, which is the Ocean County case went up to the Supreme Court on the gap period. They are in settlement discussions and there have been some road blocks, specifically Fair Share Housing is looking to get their attorney fees paid by the Township and the Township is resisting that and if that issue cannot be resolved, then at the end of April there will be a trial.

Chairperson VanHise spoke about other cases in other Counties. Ocean, Monmouth and Mercer Counties are all one housing region, but there are three different judges. There is nothing going on legislatively and that is where it stands. Ms. Washington stated she saw in the paper about a meeting next Wednesday on Affordable Housing hearing for Lawrence and no one knows about this. She saw the ad in the Times and will send the article to us. Ms. Washington stated it was more like an announcement. The Court is trying to pressure settlement and have the special masters working overtime. The obligations with this expanded present need are expected to go up because the Supreme Court is essentially invented a whole new category. Traditionally you had prior round up obligation, you had present need, there is sufficiently deficient housing units in a municipality and you figured out what the obligation was going to be over the next ten years and the Supreme Court went yes and there is a 15 year period. It is definitely not prospective need because it is already happened and just called it expanded present need.

This new expanded present need which has no guidance, there are some things you can't do (double count) but they never said what it was and how to calculate it. So the Judge is going to wait and see what the experts submit and will review, evaluate and shift into a special master role.

Other Business:

Councilman Bobbitt spoke about the Lawrence Shopping Center that someone from Hamilton purchased the property and will try to fix it up.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Digital audio file of this meeting is available upon request.

Respectfully submitted,


Susan J. Snook
Recording Secretary

Minutes approved: June 22, 2017