

**Braintree Community Preservation Committee**  
Minutes

**September 20, 2010**  
Braintree Town Hall

Present: John Dennehy                      Darryl Mikami  
          Pat Flynn                             Dick Fletcher

Absent: Anne Murphy, Linda Raiss and Mike Dorn

Also present: Judi Barrett, Community Opportunities Group  
                  Lauren Murphy, Executive Director – Braintree Housing Authority  
                  Christine Stickney, Director of Planning & Community Development

Meeting convened at 7:35 PM.

Discussion on CPA Funds and Affordable Housing:

Christine introduced Judi Barrett, Director of Planning for the Community Opportunities Group of Boston and provided a handout of her background and expertise. Christine provided some history about the committee and their past recommendations along with recent 40B housing projects and some of the issues the Town are facing with affordable units being foreclosed and then sold at market rate. Christine asked Lauren to provide more detail on the issue. Lauren explained that given the current economy potential eligible buyers are reaching for market rate units rather than the restricted affordable units and we are therefore losing units off our 10% count.

A recommendation made by Judi was that the Town may want to adopt the local option for a Housing Trust. She provided some background on the legislation enacted in 2004 & 2005, explaining what a Housing Trust can and can not do unlike the Town and the Housing Authority because of their enabling legislation. A Housing Trust would enable the Town to purchase the units, rent them until an eligible buyer could be found or the market improves then sell at a later date. The rental and maintenance of the units could then be under the Housing Authority. Dick Fletcher questioned if the CPA could recommend funds with a specific use (i.e.: purchase unit at specific address) to the Housing Trust? Judi agreed this could be done similar to a restricted gift a Town may receive outside of the CPA process.

Christine also informed the group of Braintree's participation in a HOME Consortium with neighboring towns that is administered by Quincy, a CDBG entitlement community. Judi was asked about CPA funds and this program. Judi warned that maybe tricky because HUD funds have certain requirements and CPA has certain requirements – accounting of both funds would have to be very accurate. Judi did note under the Consolidated Plan requirement that CPA funds could be one of many resources listed. Judi provided an example of the Towns participation in a rental development where the developer could use HUD funds and the CPA funds could reserve some units. She cautioned that it has to work so that the units are not over subsidized.

Page 2 – Minutes 9-20-10

Discussing existing homes purchased with CPA funds, Christine explained the recent Norfolk County land acquisitions – the “nose” and house with CPA funds and the Sheriff’s/nurses cottages with capital finds. Nothing has been done with the existing house and Christine suggested the need for the Town to do a master plan the entire area to determine possible private/public partnerships and/or what a potential Planned Unit Development (PUD) could be for both the public and private lands. Could CPA funds be utilized in such a future build out? Judi suggested that before the Town would issue a RFP, the Town needs to be clear as to intended uses, area available and potential incentives (streamline permits, CPA funds, available land etc.) so that the Town receives a sound proposal. Developers should not be sent on a “fishing expedition” for Towns to think up ideas – that is a great expense and resources unfairly expended she cautioned. Members agreed this is one of the last large open spaces and a lot of planning should be given to its use and development. Judi suggested that the Town should consider submitting the planning as a studio project to MIT’s Urban Planning program for assistance. They recently helped the Town of Hopkinton with the Weston Nursery Project (700 + acres) long term phased project with open space preservation.

Another issued raised was in relation to CPA funds and working with Habitat for Humanity. Judi commented working with Habitat can be beneficial to increasing the affordable housing stock but units may not always count towards the 10% count unless DHCD has approved through a local initiative program – a bit more work is required with these units. Members discussed the upcoming 40B repeal campaign on the November election and what it could mean for the communities. Judi urged the Town to have a discussion of what is the housing need rather than what can be done in a checkerboard approach. A comprehensive plan addressing the housing needs of the Town will serve as a business plan for use of CPA funds. Christine noted some years back a Housing Plan was accomplished by the Planning Department and she would obtain copies for the members to review to help in understanding the need identified at that time.

Christine asked Judi if in her experience with other communities if she encountered innovative approaches using CPA funds. Judi provide background on the following communities and their efforts. In Newton, CPA funds were used as loans to the development community to develop affordable rental housing since many people can’t afford to own in Newton but can rent – that was their need. In Lincoln, CPA funds were used to purchase a home that was converted to a Group Home (each bedroom counts as a unit towards 10%) as a loan and was run by a private company specializing in group homes. Some communities have used CPA funds for “buy downs” – the Town becomes a “lender” and you are buying interest in the property – similar to a deferred loan with a perpetual restriction. In Bedford, a similar situation loans to non-profits that actually bought the property and managed – this was incentive for them to look for properties and strike deals before properties reached the market.

Page 3 – Minutes 9-20-10

Dick asked Lauren to provide the committee and Judi with background as to what the Housing Authority is currently responsible for throughout the Town. Lauren listed the following:

“667 Housing” – those are our elderly, disabled and congregate housing – we have 179 units.

“705 Housing” – residences scattered throughout the Town – 7 sites owned by the BHA and rented to families.

“689 Housing” – these are group homes – 1 site owned by BHA but leased to Human Service Options

“395 Housing” – tenant based Section 8 housing - also VASH (veteran assisted support housing) 60 vouchers issued by the VA

“MRVP Housing” – within existing sites (i.e.: Independence Manor/Skyline) – 60 units.

In total Lauren reported she oversees some 700 units of housing making the Braintree Housing Authority a good size and busy authority.

Dick Fletcher asked Judi about other Towns and when they purchase a house, fix it up and re-sell how they do it – explaining how a house was done here in Braintree with BHA workers. Judi said most include in their appropriation to acquire monies to hire a contractor to do the work – granted that sometimes costs more and the house then sells for an affordable price but that is a choice the Towns make. Dick questioned further when the house has open space how it is determined for how much each bucket should contribute. Judi provided her opinion that it is a double benefit in an urban community – open space should be preserved whenever possible since there is so little left – hard to put the dollar on which bucket pays the most.

John Dennehy felt after this discussion there is a need to gather everyone together that works on housing for a meeting and discuss what direction the Town is heading.

Judi concluded her remarks that it is important for the Town to be on the same page, understand what is needed as to housing and address the need. In addition because of the recent recession, condominiums are least favorable to rental housing. Judi added with rental comes the issue of who will manage the property most housing trust do not want to manage rather acquire but if the Housing Authority is willing to manage it may work. Members thank Judi Barrett for her comments and attending their meeting. Both Judi and Lauren left at 9pm.

Administrative matters:

No minutes were accepted and Christine briefly informed members of the two applications received – she will provide the applications before the next meeting

Meeting Adjourned at 9:05 PM - respectfully submitted – Christine Stickney