



## **OBSERVER REPORT**

### **HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE (HPPIC)–**

April 11, 2023

LWVM Observer – Bonnie Grenier

Members in Attendance: Erin Noonan, Thatcher Keezer, Becky Cutting, Kurt James, Barton Hyte, John Buckey, Lou Meyi, Deacon Joe Whipple

The focus of the meeting was a discussion of approved priorities:

#### **Leverage public assets for mixed housing:**

- Eveleth and Coffin Schools would first have to be declared surplus by the School Department and then returned to the town by a vote at Town Meeting. There has been no formal conversation about this by the School Committee. Dr. Buckey indicated that there doesn't seem to be agreement on the current board as to the future of these two properties.
- Given current state requirements, it is unclear if either the Coffin or Eveleth School sites would qualify for state funding for a new school given that the land areas may be too small.
- Eveleth School: Abbot Library will be located there for several years and not a focus of the HPPIC at this time.
- Coffin School – The building is in poor condition and it's expensive to maintain the property. The value of the property is in the land.
- Should the School Department transfer either property to the town, there would have to be a visioning session, an RFI and then an RFP voted on at Town Meeting. Timing on this would depend on if/when the properties are transferred to the town.
- The Green Street property has been transferred to the Recreation and Parks Department for use as a bicycle park for another four years after which time it will revert back to town for the development of housing.
- The Mary Ally Medical Building has had its lease extended until 2026. There's quite a bit of land there, it's near to the Broughton Road Housing overseen by the Marblehead Housing Authority and it's near the MBTA bus route, all positives for possible development.
- Thatcher mentioned that new growth revenue for the town is "anemic" and that new growth (housing) would grow revenue to share between the town and the schools.

**Partner with the Marblehead Housing Authority to leverage public assets:** Cathy Hoog, Executive Director of the Marblehead and Salem Housing Authorities was absent from the meeting. She can be a valuable resource in advising the committee as the best way to move forward in the development of Housing Authority properties. Perhaps there is some money available from Mass. Housing for a feasibility study.

**Engage community groups to support possible regulatory changes prior to town meeting:** A meeting of the Planning Board was scheduled for the evening of April 11<sup>th</sup>. It will be a public hearing on proposed zoning amendments for Town Meeting, to include the article on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). There will be a Q & A session which will be released to the public after the meeting. The Fair Housing Committee and Ministerial Association will help disseminate this information to garner support for the article.

**Expand the existing Smart Growth Overlay Districts (SGOD) and create new SGODs in other parts of town:**

- There was a study back in 2009 but most of the recommendations are not relevant due to subsequent development of the various properties.
- Both landowners and developers must be interested in these projects for them to get off the ground
- The MBTA Multi-Family Zoning District requirement for Marblehead is 27 acres, which is not possible. No designated area can be less than 5 acres.
- Smart Growth developments will give the town money from real estate taxes and some additional money from the state.
- Zoning bylaws would have to be changed to allow for greater density.
- There would be concerns about parking with any development.

**Strengthen the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF):**

- There is \$118,900 in the Trust Fund
- An additional \$10,000 will be coming in from the development of the Gerry School
- Smart Growth money from the development at Vinnin Square (former General Glover House) could be designated to go into the AHTF. One payment is received upon permitting of a project and one after it is built. The town would have to approve this money going into the AHTF.
- The AHTF Committee hasn't met, but a specific request with a worthy purpose from the HPPIC could prompt a meeting.

**Propose Inclusionary Zoning in concert with MBTA process:**

- The town has received a \$20,000 grant to hire an engineering firm to help identify possible areas for zoning changes. Their report should be available soon. The public process would follow soon thereafter.
- Most of the town is within a half mile of the MBTA
- It was suggested that the committee look to see what other communities have done recently to comply with the new regulations. What problems have they run into?
- There would have to be zoning bylaw changes to present at Town Meeting 2024 before going forward
- There is no affordable housing component to this program.

Louis Meyi took the opportunity to recognize the Marblehead Democratic Town Committee for their informational session on affordable housing and Sustainable Marblehead for their recent program in February that emphasized density in housing as environmentally sound.

The next meeting will be hybrid on May 9<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 at Abbot Hall.