



OBSERVER REPORT

HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE (HPPIC)–

May 9, 2023 - Hybrid Meeting – Not Recorded

LWV Observer – Bonnie Grenier

Members in Attendance: Erin Noonan, Thatcher Keezer, Becky Cutting, Kurt James, Barton Hyte, John Buckey, Teri McDonough, Louis Meyi.
Others: Cathy Hoog, Executive Director of the Salem/Marblehead Housing Authorities

Teri McDonough announced that since she will be taking a new job she would no longer be able to serve as secretary. Erin will look for volunteers to take minutes in the future.

Cathy Hoog informed the committee that she had just submitted an application to the Massachusetts Housing Partnership for a technical assistance grant to explore the re-development of the Broughton Road Housing Authority property. The grant is approximately \$35,000 to hire a consultant to develop a feasibility study. As the process moves along Massachusetts Housing would have additional grants available.

Leveraging Public Assets for Mixed Income Housing: John Buckey, Superintendent of Schools spoke to the fact that the current School Committee is divided as to what to do with the Coffin School property. The June 2023 town election will bring new members to the School Committee so the feeling is that any decision should wait until after the election. Thatcher Keezer reminded members that once it is determined that the property will not be used for educational purposes, it must be turned over to the town by a vote at Town Meeting. He explained that the financial benefit to the schools from turning this property over to the town would come with increased revenue from new growth once the property is developed. Superintendent Buckey mentioned that there is an RFP out for the cost for demolition of the Coffin School.

Expand Existing Smart Growth Overlay District - The Committee needs to review and update proposals from the study that was done in 2009. A consultant will need to be hired to identify which areas in town can be developed and the owners of those properties will have to be contacted. Grant money may be available from the MAPC for technical assistance from a consultant. For those property owners who might be interested in re-development, an initial meeting with Thatcher and Becky would be the way to proceed.

To comply with the MBTA Communities Act, the town needs to designate at least 27 acres in total for possible development of multi-family housing. The minimum lot size is 5 acres. The Historic District would be exempt from this development. The Planning Board would have to draft new zoning by-laws for town counsel for review. They would then have to be approved by a vote at Town Meeting.

It will be helpful to reach out to other communities to see how they are handling the requirements of this new legislation. It has been made clear by the state that communities that do not comply with the new law will have reduced access to state grant money in the future. There was mention of the fact that development projects take significant time and effort, and that public procurement laws need to be revisited to facilitate more affordable housing projects.

Teri announced that the HOME Consortium has a significant amount of ARPA money available to address homelessness. She mentioned that every year in February there is a state-wide count of homeless people. In Marblehead this survey is conducted by the Police Department. Louis Meyi suggested that the Schools Department and Council on Aging be included in the survey since they are likely sources of information about homeless people in town.

Erin would like to invite State Representative Jenny Armini to a future meeting to talk about opportunities for affordable housing.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 27th at 3:30 at Abbot Hall.