



OBSERVER REPORT

MARBLEHEAD HOUSING COMMITTEE – December 9, 2025

Hybrid Meeting- Recorded

LWVM Observer- Julie Matuschak

Attendees: Kurt James, Alex Eitler, Debra Larkin,, Nisha Austin, Ramon Garcia, Mimi Hollister, Brendan Callahan.

The meeting began at 3:35 pm

Minutes from the meeting of 10/14/25 were approved.

Discussion re: Coffin School: Brendan Callahan

Neighborhood meeting

Brendan reported that a neighborhood meeting was held in September to let abutters and others know that the town wanted to dispose of the property. Concerns from abutters included issues with the playground and rats among others. The main concern was with eventual development. There was a hope that at least some open space would be preserved. Public listening sessions have also taken place at Abbott Hall, with a follow-up meeting in January.

The Marblehead Housing Authority proposed affordable housing for the site. Community Development suggested boat storage, at least on a temporary basis. The Light Department proposed a location for battery energy storage

Requests for Information

RFIs were received by the Cemetery Commission for expansion; the Marblehead Housing Authority for affordable housing; and Harborlight for affordable housing.

Housing seems to be the consensus for use for this property. While not determined and no preference has been given, senior living/affordable housing with preference for Marblehead residents seems to have most support, including a potential for some open space.

Next steps

Brendan will be sending a memo to the Select Board for their review, with recommendations for next steps, including an application for technical assistance to the Massachusetts Housing Partnership, a quasi-public group, to help with zoning analysis,

site development, and drafting request for proposals. This could be a 3 to 4 month process. The town is not precluded from this application despite 3A non-compliance.

Discussion

Mimi asked who would make the final decision on usage. The property has been declared surplus, so the Select Board will make the final decision. The decision will not go back to Town Meeting.

Brendan added that a consultant had been hired to do an asbestos study and report before Christmas with abatement and demolition costs.

Kurt asked whether demolition would be necessary. The developer will be eligible for this decision. If the building is not totally demolished, it could be eligible for historic tax credits. Possibly only the annex will be demolished.

Zoning changes will have to go to Town Meeting, possibly in 2027, for a vote on a "friendly 40B" housing development.

Ramon asked if a special permit for incentive zoning could be requested. This does not normally occur with multi-family housing.

The Harborlight proposal would include a main structure with an addition.

Brendan will reach out to the Marblehead Housing Authority about the structure of the Broughton Road project and will share at the next meeting.

Nisha asked what the Housing Committee could do. The Housing Committee should send a letter to the Select Board recommending that fair and affordable housing be pursued. Nisha offered to draft the letter. A motion to this effect was made and allowed.

3A Compliance

Regarding 3A, the Planning Board has a partially updated proposal that will be submitted to the EOHLC. This proposal includes two parcels, comprising 897 units, at Tedesco Street and Broughton Road. Zoning is being finalized for this plan. The EOHLC should respond by the end of January.

Next meeting

TBD-possibly 1/12/25

Meeting adjourned at 4:30pm.