

SELECT BOARD
TOWN OF NATICK

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Conducted in the Edward H. Dlott
Meeting Room and via Zoom
February 4, 2023
8:00 AM

PRESENT: Paul R. Joseph, Chair; Michael J. Hickey, Jr., Vice-Chair; Bruce T. Evans, Clerk; Kathryn M. Coughlin; Richard Sidney

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator, James Errickson

ABSENT: None.

Chair Joseph called the meeting to order at 8:01 AM.

The Chair announced that this meeting is currently being recorded by Natick Pegasus for future viewing.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a Moment of Silence for recognition and appreciation for those who serve.

PUBLIC SPEAK

Roger Scott stated that he watched the meetings of the Select Board, Planning Board and School Committee which was on February 1, 2023, and wished to let other people know that it was informative. He encouraged other citizens to watch the broadcast on Natick Pegasus.

1. DISCUSSION AND DECISION

A. 5 Auburn Street RFP (Request for Proposal) Interviews with Select Board

Chair Joseph announced this morning that both the Metro West Collaborative Development (Metro West) and Natick Affordable Housing Trust will both have 45 minutes to present to the Board. Attached to this morning's agenda are all relevant documents related to the Request for Proposal (RFP), including responses to the RFP, an in-house comparison matrix, and Metro West's presentation document as well as Natick Affordable Housing Trust's (NAHT) presentation document.

1. 8:15 - 9:00 am - Interview with Metro West Collaborative Development

Caitlin Madden, Executive Director of Metro West Collaborative Development, presented their vision for the historic adaptive for the Eliot School located at 5 Auburn St. Derek Hansen, was also present to answer questions, as Mr. Hansen is the Senior Real Estate Manager.

Attached to this agenda is the full presentation given by Ms. Madden.

Ms. Madden answered a question posed by Mr. Evans with regard to what authority the Historic District Commission and/or the Planning Board may have over this project. Ms. Madden noted that if they are proceeding with a comprehensive permit under 40(b), they would not have formal voting authority over the project at all. However, Metro West, in other similar projects, has worked hand in hand with those Boards and Commissions to ensure that their feedback is heard and that they are not shut out of the process.

Ms. Coughlin inquired about the scale of the project and asked how Metro West had come up with the number of bedrooms per unit. Ms. Madden answered that those numbers are largely driven by the requirements of the State with regard to bedroom mix and unit size.

Mr. Sidney raised the issue as to whether the developer had included enough parking spaces. Mr. Sidney noted that for 109 people, 37 spaces did not seem like enough. Mr. Hansen stated that thorough research has been done from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and that research suggests that the density of cars is first and foremost driven by the availability of parking. So, theoretically there will be more cars if there are more spaces and less cars if there are less spaces.

Mr. Hansen also addressed a question by the Board about taking on a building that needed a tremendous amount of work. Mr. Hansen noted that they had not completely done their due diligence with regard to reviewing all of the needs of the building, but they had a very skilled team that has done very similar projects and dealt with buildings in far worse condition.

A member of the public asked why the responders to the RFP had not collaborated or reached out to neighbors of the potential project. Chair Joseph stated that the responders were interviewing to be selected by the Board so he believed that some of the responders would think it was presumptive to reach out to neighbors prior to being selected. Ms. Madden added that right now Metro West is going through the selection process but if they were to be chosen, that would be part of the "network".

The Board finished this interview and recessed at 9:50 AM.

2. 9:15 - 10:00 am - Interview with Natick Affordable Housing Trust

At 10:00 AM, the Board reconvened for the interview with Natick Affordable Housing Trust.

Ganesh Ramachandran, Chair of the Natick Affordable Housing Trust, was present before the Board this morning and delivered a presentation that was divided into three parts:

1. The Trust's mission
2. Natick Affordable Housing Initiative
 - Policy
 - Programming
 - Planning
 - Production

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3. Proposed Plan Site

Chair Ramachandran also noted that Craig Nicholson from Affirmative Investments was present to discuss the financial feasibility analysis of the proposal which he had developed.

Mr. Hickey raised the question as to why the Affordable Housing Trust is really in “in the middle of this”? He added that he is confused as to why we would need them involved in this at all. Chair Ramachandran answered by stating that at the beginning of the process, the Trust did not know how many, if any, responders there would be to the RFP. One of the main goals at that time was to make sure that the Trust was able to open up a dialogue about affordable housing. He added that if there had been no other responders, the Trust would have been able to do the groundwork for the affordable housing developers.

Mr. Hickey then asked a second question. If the Board were to choose them, then what would the secondary process look like?

Randy Johnson was present and stated to the Board that the Affordable Housing Trust really does not see themselves as the developer of the project and that they would pass that to someone else.

Mr. Hickey also asked why there was no covered parking or garages added if this plan were to be for the elderly. Wouldn't this be a huge concern for the elderly population? Mr. Johnson did agree that elderly people would all prefer to have covered parking, but in these types of complexes, covered parking is not the norm.

Ms. Coughlin inquired as to how well the maintenance and grounds would be maintained in an affordable housing complex. Mr. Nicholson stated that any affordable is very well regulated when it comes to ongoing operations and maintenance. The likelihood of an “affordable” falling into disrepair without the State or an investor stepping in is very small.

Chair Joseph added additional information to the public that the Trust, at the time of the RFP release, made \$600,000.00 available from their trust for this project.

Questions ended at 10:30 AM

On a motion by Mr. Sidney, seconded by Mr. Joseph, the Board, adjourned the meeting at 10:34 AM.



Richard Sidney, Clerk

February 4, 2023, Select Board Meeting Minutes Approved by the Select Board on June 14, 2023.

All documents used at this Select Board meeting are available at:

<https://naticktown.novusagenda.com/agendapublic/MeetingView.aspx?MeetingID=1127&MinutesMeetingID=-1&doctype=Agend>