

Community Preservation Committee Meeting – LWVN Observer Notes

February 27, 2012 7pm

Room 202 Newton City Hall

Present: Alice Ingerson, Nancy Grissom, Thomas Turner, Leslie Burg (Chair), Walter Bernheimer, Michael Clarke, Joel Feinberg, Zack Blake, Dan Green.

I. **Committee Business:** Ingerson summarized the fiscal update for 2012 and funding forecast for fiscal year 2013-17. She showed slides that are being presented at the CPC “birthday parties” throughout the City. Money has been allocated to all categories. She said it is unlikely that the \$4.5m balance will be renewed once spent. 4 potential scenarios were presented for how to find an appropriate balance between uses going forward, as most cannot be funded. With pie-chart graphics, possibilities between equal thirds, to disproportionate percentages, to four quarters (more pie pieces mean less \$\$ available per category) were shown. Approximately eight potential proposals have expressed interest/inquiries.

II. **Myrtle Village:** Rev. Howard Hayward presented on behalf of Myrtle Baptist LLC, a “single purpose LLC” specifically set up to create this housing project at 12 and 18-20 Curve St, West Newton. Rev. Brandon T. --?—and Shelby Robinson were also present to talk about various aspects of the proposal. The project grew as part of the church’s mission. They partnered with professionals who have experience developing affordable housing: Newton Community Development Foundation (NCDF) with Bob Engler and Jeanne Strickland, Exec. Director, present, and architect Angelo Kyriakides, who will also be the Project Manager.

The plan is to maximize the number of units and open space. Rehabbing two existing homes, currently owned by the church, into 7 units of varying sizes and types to accommodate a range of family sizes:

- 1 with 1 BR, fully accessible, no ramps, at grade
- 4 with 2 BR, first floor accessible
- 2 with 3 BR, first floor accessible

The site design was explained. Each unit will have its own terrace, porch and outside storage shed for trash barrels. Building design is based on life-cycle costs, where initial construction methods and materials are higher than standard but will save money over time due to less maintenance in the future.

The structures are within the Myrtle Baptist Church Historic District, and the plans have already been vetted by the Historic Commission.

Public Hearing Comments by the audience and CPC committee members: the room was full, with approximately 15-20 residents attending to support the project, most of whom did not speak.

*Mr. Leppi (sp?): questioned many of the financials including the developer fees, the Project Manager fees, LLC fees, development consulting fees, he mentioned that Warren House needed extra money to repair the roof years later.

*Andrea Kelley: spoke for the LWVN, praising the thoroughness of the proposal, goals of the project, track record of the development consultant, the character and scale of the architecture fitting into the neighborhood. She read the League’s Questions and Comments from their prepared statement, including the concern that \$300 per unit for operating reserves seems low.

Responses from Haywood, Engler, Strickland and Kyriakides indicated that the higher per unit costs reflect that rehab is more expensive than new construction, and that being in an Historic District indicating rehab; they are comfortable with the \$300 operating reserve (but would like more if they had it), the energy efficiency using EnergyStar appliances and green products increase the price: higher initial costs will lead to long term benefits. They may bond or borrow for long-term maintenance if needed after 15-20 years, which is usual.

*Bernheimer: felt strongly that the \$300 operating reserves/unit are too low, a higher amount would be prudent. \$12,000 maintenance fee/yr also seems “too thin”.

*Feinberg: asked who will subsidize the 40B request, hoping it will be the Mayor/City (the response was hopefully yes, but that has not been filed yet), and asked if it can be structured so that the reserves go back into the project later not the LLC. It was clarified that the LLC is NOT the church but solely created for this project- there is no church liability or funding of this.

*Fran Godine: representing Newton Congregations, an inter-faith organization, spoke in favor of the proposal

*Robert Caruso: a resident in a wheelchair, praised this as a “wonderful project” and noted the grade access as a plus

*Dan Blake: said that the off-site parking at the church needs to be approved through zoning relief such as a deed restriction, or through the Comprehensive Permit

*Phil Herr: expressed support of the Newton Housing Partnership, which met twice while reviewing this project which they applaud, the financials were carefully done

*Bob Mallo, housing planner for Newton: the Planning and Development Board agrees that the affordability should be in perpetuity not just 30 years, and an easement not a lease agreement needs to be made for the off-site parking

VOTE: Bernheimer made the Motion to approve the \$938,063 amount requested, conditional of the project being granted a Special Permit. Seconded by Dan Green. Unanimous approval. 8:28 pm

I departed at this point, before the CPC agenda got to more Committee Business: 10th Anniversary program, discussion and approval of draft fy13 budget, approval of Dec. 6, 2011 and Jan. 24, 2012 minutes, staff updates on current and anticipated projects still on the agenda.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Kelley, Observer

3-3-2012