

Bedford Housing Partnership
Meeting Minutes
April 4, 2023 at 7:00 PM
Prepared by Elena Zorn
Zoom

Attending Members: Christina Wilgren (Chair), Elena Zorn, Jacinda Barbehenn,, Margaret Siciliano, and Shawn Hanegan (non-voting member)

Absent: Ellis Kriesberg, Alice Sun, Kim Lovy

Others Present: Jeff King (staff)

Call to order. Ms. Wilgren called the BHP meeting to order at 7:09 pm via Zoom remote participation conference call; A roll call occurred for committee members to announce their presence.

Roll call:

Yes: Ms. Wilgren (chair), Ms. Zorn, Ms. Barbehenn, Ms. Siciliano, and Mr. Hanegan.

Because we did not have a quorum, the meeting was a work session only.

1. January 18 2023 Meeting Minutes:

Postponed to April 18th meeting

2. BHP Operating Procedures:

Goals of meeting

- 1) Look at clarifying operating procedures both internal and external facing.
 - a. Set up standing meeting –
 - b. Setting timelines for submitting materials and additional expectations of applicants
 - c. Where does BHP fit in the whole system (town government), how can we improve the process?
- 2) Talk about priorities of our committee if we have time

1.c: Some decisions are unilateral to this committee (like meeting times and material submission dates) and some need to be coordinated with other groups like the Select Board. For example, for a LIP application, the BHP and the Select Board are co-signers and should therefore be able to see the materials submitted to both committees.

Standing meeting

- Tuesdays opposite of planning board and BHA could work. Looks like 3rd Tuesday of the month is clear. 7pm was agreed upon. Jeff will make sure to keep up with town schedule to deconflict.

Suggested timelines and additional process

- We need to have the weekend to look over things, so maybe one week before our meeting the committee members should receive material for the upcoming meeting
- Applicants should submit before that and give Jeff enough time to have a bit of back and forth if necessary. It was suggested that this deadline be an additional week prior so that Jeff will have one week to sort out any issues before sending material to committee members. 4pm deadline.
- Applicants will expect to have an introductory/preliminary meeting with BHP and that's when we can outline the expectations and schedule going forward. The next meeting would be when they come with materials.
- Applicants will be expected to report on community outreach plan with dates so BHP members know and be invited to attend. This will be written down for them to know to expect to have this conversation at the preliminary meeting. The hope is that this will feel more like a team effort when we are participating in the outreach portion of the plan. The outreach can depend on the size/impact of the project so that small projects will at a minimum connect with abutters, larger ones the neighborhood or even broader community. Developer should report back on concerns heard and how they might address it.
- Discussions happened covering:
 - o When outreach should happen and if it is a requirement of receiving approval from BHP.
 - o More conversations with Select board to understand what "friendly" means.
 - o Shawn's understanding is that a traditional 40B is one where a builder can override a town's wishes as long as they meet some criteria for housing needs and the town does not yet have the 10% threshold for low income housing. A friendly version happens when the town has met that 10% threshold and now the two work together.
 - o Jacinda brought up LIP (Local Initiative Project) means a local builder works with the town.
 - o What is role of BHP regarding negotiating with the builder? Christina has knowledge about what the Trust can do and that information is not necessarily understood by the BHP members. Margaret brought up that other towns have the two entities in one and reduces confusion. Is there a path forward to combining Trust and BHP? This might help with negotiating with the builder because commitments or understanding on what dollar amount can be committed by the Trust can be discussed and included in the framework that the builder provides. Jeff will look into this.
 - o We discussed whether we should ask the developer to commit to more than the minimum affordable housing units because we have that leverage. We can even let the builders know that there is an expectation to commit to more than the minimum before they start the process. South Road may have come back with additional affordable without being asked, but Jeff would get back to that.
 - o Trust BHP and frameworks, interplay and communication needs to be brought up

- Adequate time for deliberation. We do not need to make decisions the night the developer comes to the meeting. Members need adequate time to deliberate and will not be forced to vote. Potential to schedule a special meeting for additional time to deliberate and vote. Clear communication about expectations will help the process for all.
 - Meeting order discussions. Invite applicant to make a presentation at the beginning of the meeting. Some interactions will ensue. Then there is an opportunity for deliberation. Board will make a decision with sufficient time and deliberation and may not happen that meeting. Minutes can be approved at the end of the meeting.
 - Comments that “friendly” means we work together, so there may be more interactions/meetings.
 - Supplemental vs complete applications. Applications need to be submitted in full. Minor changes accepted at the discretion of the board. E.g. traffic studies sometimes considered supplemental and sometimes not. Maybe Jeff can make a list of what’s considered supplemental or not. And clarify what are the submittal requirements. Supplemental deadlines are seven days ahead of the next BHP meeting. Full package plus supplemental will be provided to the BHP board together and not later that seven days before the meeting .If supplemental material is submitted after the seven day deadline, it will not be included bumped to following BHP meeting.
- Wrapping up we decided on next two meeting dates (3rd Tuesday of the months). Shawn was going to bring back to Select Board parts of this discussion regarding working with them more closely on this process and suggest a subcommittee be formed to address the issues. And Jeff will still work out how BHP works with Trust.

3. Adjourn: Ms. Wilgren declared the need to end the meeting and adjourned the meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 PM.