

**SELECT BOARD PRESENTATION
BOXFORD HOUSING PARTNERSHIP
AUGUST 8, 2022**

INTRODUCTION

This presentation to the Select Board is a summary of the current activities of the Boxford Housing Partnership.

SENIOR GRANT PROGRAM

The article to establish the Boxford Small Repair Grant Trust (approved at the May Town meeting) has been submitted to the State Legislature for approval. It appears that Senator Tarr has planned to put this on a fast track because, on June 21, 2022, the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government requested a written testimony for the article by June 24. It was submitted in a timely manner and we are currently waiting for a response on the status.

In preparation for the approval of the article, the Boxford Housing Partnership (BHP) is requesting that the Select Board identify a proposed slate of trustees. There is a significant amount of work that has to be done in setting up the detail steps of the program. This time before the trust is established would allow the proposed trustees to become familiar with the process and provide input on the work done to date. Once the trust is established, the trustees will then have to create the grant agreement that the recipient will be required to sign. At that point, the grant program can go live. We have already received inquiries about the status of the grant program.

BOXFORD COMMONS ARCHITECTURAL STUDY

At the annual Town meeting, the CPC awarded \$34,200 to the BHP to hire an architect for several purposes: to inform the voters of a possible development on Boxford Commons, address uncertainties in that development and identify possible cost-effective designs that fit with Boxford. A development on the community housing portion of Boxford Commons is particularly challenging since Boxford Board of Health septic regulations limit the development to 12 senior units, far less than many developers have interest. If we do not do this study, we may not get a realistic bid from private developers to build and manage such a development. This study will allow the Town to generate a focused RFP for the development and establish reasonable evaluation criteria. Just to be clear, this is not a Town owned and controlled development.

This will be a 2-phase program: The first is a feasibility phase to examine cost effective configurations of housing on a parcel purchased with CPA funds in an Elderly Housing District. During this time, input from Town boards and committees will be solicited, such as the Planning Board and the Historical District Committee. A financial analyst will be hired to examine the numbers and determine if these are consistent with the income levels of eligible residents. This study is only for the construction of the housing units since it is assumed that the development infrastructure (well, septic, road, sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, backup generator, etc.) would be subsidized by CPA funds restricted to community

housing. The financial analysis would determine what additional subsidy (if any) would be needed for the housing.

It is important to perform this financial review since this development is substantially different than standard elderly developments in the area, which are multi story structures with hallways, stairways and elevators. Developers are quick to use a normalized development cost of approximately \$350/ sq. ft., which should not apply to the proposed single story structures. This study will be an educational process both for the Town as well as the developer.

The second phase of the program will be one of public education in preparation for the annual Town meeting. This will be an opportunity to obtain public input on the approach and show the rational for the proposed solutions along with financial backup and possible elevations of a typical design. This work will hopefully facilitate a Town vote to rezone the area as an Elderly Housing District and a vote to transfer the property to the care and custody of the Select Board for development. A draft of the RFP for an architect has been submitted to the Town Administrator for his review.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Hill, Chair

Jim Barnes

Ted Ritter

Boxford Housing Partnership