

Low and Moderate Income Housing Development Task Force

Monday, January 30, 2023 - 11:00 am

Jim Monty - Chairman

Chairman Monty called this task force to order at 11:20 am with the following in attendance: Clayton Barber, Derek Doty, Ken Hughes, Jim Monty, Matt Stanley, Meg Wood, Mark Wright, Jim Dougan, Mike Mascarenas, Nicole Justice-Green Bruce Misarski, Terri Morse, and Carol Calabrese. Mike Diskin, Krissy Leerkes, Bill Tansey, and Alan Jones were absent.

Also present: - Megan Murphy and Dina Garvey.

MONTY: Thank you all for coming, again I'm very pleased with the direction that we're moving with the Land Bank. As you know, we handed out the draft version of the application and I'm really excited that we're moving forward in that regard. Our plan is to have Supervisors all review that application and everyone on the Task Force review that to make sure that our I's are dotted and our T's are crossed and we've got everything that we need to have in it. To clarify what happened with the land bank application for Franklin County, the submitted it and did not hear anything back. They were fortunate enough to send it, return receipt requested, and they had their signed receipt from the Department of State that they had received it. Well, after a month they hadn't heard anything from them, come to find out, the Department of State lost their application. Two days after they received it, the second application, it got approved. So, and they're excited and in talking with Lindy Ellis, who is a legislator in Franklin County, they're very interested in working with us, separately, obviously, because they wanted to join our land bank, but we wanted to have our own and their thoughts are, they haven't really done much, as far as their bylaws, policies, stuff of that nature. They're working on it now and she wanted to know what we were doing. If we had done them. I said, well we have some we're working on now, tentatively. I think, really, that should be our focus, if there's nothing glaring with our application, is to make sure, now, that we're looking at our bylaws, you know and everything so that when we're approved, because there's no doubt we're going to be approved. I truly believe that. I think we have, you have done a great job creating a stuff application. So, I'm really excited about that. I think it's going a long way to help in our situation. Is it going to solve the problem overnight? Absolutely not. This problem will be here, I think for many, many years, but by at least taking our head out of the sane, recognizing the issue, we're moving forward on it and I feel we have some great partners and I think this is something that's going to really, really help Essex County.

On the same note, I had a conversation with a local contractor who is very much interested in putting a project together with us, down the road pertaining to affordable housing. They've got a tract of land that's within a hamlet of a community that they own. They've actually been permitted for 42 units in it, but they're not, obviously, they can't afford to do all 24 at the same time. But, this maybe something that we can look into and help them in getting that up. So, I think things are coming together and I'm pretty excited about that.

That's all I have, does the Task Force?

DOTY: Jim, I have a hypothetical situation, I guess for Nicole. As I mentioned earlier about the lot that we identified in Saranac Lake, it was actually found by Susan Waterson from Franklin County, which I am sure that you probably work with Susan, who in turn works with Emily, who will be working with you quite often. Is there a way collaborate between counties to do a joint project? I mean could funds cross a line to make it more doable?

JUSTICE-GREEN: Hypothetically, yes. The main determinate of whether we can do that is going to be the pooled funding. So, if we apply for a specific grant and it's only limited to Essex County, we potentially wouldn't be able to use that pool funding. Now, the seed funding that we're going to be receiving, hopefully, from the County, the ARPA funds, yes. I mean that has less restrictions on it. Also, the funding that we're receiving back when we're selling the homes, that goes back into the general operating fund of the land bank. So, again, we'll have multiple pots of money, so long as there's not eligibility of location restrictions in the grant funding. If it's within the mission of the land bank and I mean, gosh, even in Ticonderoga, we're got Warren and Washington County, just throw a rock and you're there. So, there's plenty of opportunities for collaboration, I think that only strengthens us.

DOTY: Right now, the thing is everyone shares the same excitement. So, rather than to say to your next-door neighbor, no, we're going to, we want the headlines. I think working together will prove the area stronger for everyone.

JUSTICE-GREEN: And it's not lost on me, the profound amount of work that needs to be done for this. So, there's plenty of work to go around and it's many hand make light work.

MONTY: That property is in Franklin County?

DOTY: No, but you know the Village of Saranac Lake sits in two counties and three townships. So, when something comes up and show interest, we show interest, as well and if we can do something together and I say go for it.

MASCARENAS: Yeah, just to further add to the conversation and anytime you have something like that you would have one person, one agency, one group that had the fiscal responsibility, but what it doesn't stop is those counties and townships for giving letters of support, those kinds of things. Speaking about how they're going to collaborate and work together, but the fiscal responsibility would typically fall to one agency or another. That way there's not a confusion in terms of who's going to pay what, who's going to do what.

DOTY: Sure

MASCARENAS: But, it can happen.

JUSTICE-GREEN: And we can also keep in mind when we're applying for funding that clearly delineating those sorts of situations where there are certain townships and areas within Essex County that sits in multiple counties.

MONTY: Anything else? Any other questions? I know it was short and quick. I thank you all for coming. I know you took time out of our day to be here. But, please review that draft application and see if there's something you don't like in it and get back to us, because we want the strongest application possible. I know, Bill is still working on bylaws and things. Do you have anything, Bill that seen in our application that might warrant concern?

TANSEY: No, I think the application looks strong. I think it has all the information we need to set up a land bank with the bylaw issue, Nicole and I are working on the bylaws. I think the important part here is that, to use her words, symbiotic with Pride, but I think the land bank needs to be its own separate item. It needs to have some political ties to the Board. We need to be able to focus on a strict policy if we've ever questioned of how properties get into the land bank and how they get out of the land bank and then the ownership of the property, so that gets into the land bank and then as Dan Manning mentioned, it comes out clean. We have to launder these properties so there are legal liabilities, debt liabilities.

MONTY: I think and correct me, if I'm wrong from a legal standpoint, Bill. Supervisors sitting on that Board would that qualify and take care of the governmental aspect of what you're saying?

TANSEY: I think it would, yes.

MONTY: Because that is what the plan is all along, is that two supervisors will be placed on that Board as members.

TANSEY: I think what it comes down to is when the property comes in to the land bank; there's going an ownership issue. Is Essex County going to own that property or is the land bank going to own the property?

HUGHES: The land bank.

TANSEY: I don't see us transferring ownership to Pride. So, there's going to have to be some contractual relationship there for Pride to the work and then transfer the contract over.

MONTY: I don't think the intent was to ever transfer the property to Pride. It was going over to the land bank. They're going to handle the administrative dues. HAPEC is going to partner with us to do the first time homebuyer vetting of that nature. When you're talking about the bylaws and you're working with Nicole, because include Megan at HAPEC on those, too, as well, if you would.

TANSEY: Yes, so I think that having the two supervisors on the Board of the land bank satisfies that political control.

MONTY: I think so, too.

TANSEY: The Board of Supervisors can pull out at any time.

MONTY: Right

HUGHES: Just to be clear, this relationship that we are establishing is actually a relationship that already exists in Tioga County. I don't know if I shared that with you or not. So, I think from a legal perspective, and they've been active for a couple of years, if there's questions about how that relationship exists, Tioga County attorneys are probably going to be able to probably answer that and save you some time.

TANSEY: Thank you

HUGHES: Thank you. I do want to say real quickly, I haven't said too much today, and this is mostly for Megan and HAPEC. I did a fine toothcomb review of this today, and I just want to be clean, because we haven't talked. That on question 5, page 7, I believe that there was some language that HAPEC did put in there, they're on Step 7, it wasn't identified as HAPEC, it relates to the housing trust and I just want to get in the record to say that there is a slight modification to the language that was presented and recommended and so, if you guys could take a look at that. If you don't have the current version, I can get you a copy of the current version or you can just take a look online.

MURPHY: On the link?

HUGHES: It's on the link, yup. Just, I would like to, just take peek at it and I just want to make sure you're good with it, but it was a slight modification. I think it stills answers what you guys were requesting, but it's not the exact language. I just wanted to be transparent, thanks.

MURPHY: I will look at it this afternoon.

HUGHES: Yeah, at your convenience, appreciate it.

MONTY: And if there's nothing else, I'm going to give my one last plug for United Way. Pride of Ti received a need grant, last week, from United Way. It doesn't compare anywhere near the \$10 million dollars they got the State, but United Way gave them \$2,500.00 to go to their Neighbors Helping Neighbors, which is a phenomenal program. Read up on that, it's a great program. It's something we may want to consider elsewhere in the county. So, by all means, you know United Way has a presence in Essex County and I'm working on getting them an application so that they will become a partner agency, so that we can donate directly to Pride of Ti. Thank you and thank you all for coming and be safe.

**AS THERE WAS NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THIS TASK FORCE
WAS ADJOURNED AT 11:32 AM.**

Respectively Submitted,

Dina Garvey, Deputy Clerk
Board of Supervisors