Community Land Trust Working Group Meeting 8 Notes - Tuesday, October 9th

Members present: Co-chairs Alderman Ewen-Campen and Teresa Vazquez-Dodero, Alex Bob, David Gibbs, Liz Haney and Alderman JT Scott

The group was joined by Annie Connor from the Mayor's Office to allow working group members the opportunity to ask any questions they might have in these early development stages, as CLTs often work closely with their local municipal governments. Annie shared that the Mayor's Office is glad to support the working group and subsequently established CLT in any way it can, as it is fully supportive of this concept which was recommended by the Sustainable Neighborhoods Working Group in 2015 and was included as one of 10 2018 Mayoral Housing Initiatives as laid out in Mayor Curtatone' s 2018 Inaugural Address.

Annie noted two initial ways the Mayor's Office could offer support to the group- connecting group members to potential resources through the Metro Mayor's Housing Task Force and supporting the group in seeking legal assistance where it might be needed, such as during the process of incorporating the organization. Annie also offered some legislative updates on matters such as updating the condo conversion ordinance, submitting Right of First Refusal legislation and passing the Transfer Fee. These items have the potential to strengthen a Somerville CLT in a reliable and long-lasting way, and many of the members of the working group have also been involved in those efforts. The condo conversion ordinance is currently being discussed before the Board of Aldermen Legislative Matters Committee, the Transfer Fee remains pending approval at the State level and the Right of First Refusal is a larger lift that will be further addressed following progress made on the other two items.

The role the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund (SAHTF) might play was raised as well, so Alderman Ewen-Campen provided some information regarding guidelines of what the SAHTF can and cannot fund. Specifically, Alderman Ewen-Campen explained that at the present time there is an ongoing legal question around whether SAHTF can only provide funds tied to specific units and not for operations or support services. Operations costs will be challenging to fund (which is typical for new CLTs) so the discussion shifted to how the CLT will fund those costs, such as staffing. Fundraising and community engagement will also be critical for the success of this effort and organization.

Over the course of research done and conferences attended, it is clear that CLTs often need substantial support in the early years of the life of the organization as the success of the model relies on growth. It is common to find that local municipalities provide staffing, start-up funds and/or other administrative services to new CLTS, so Alderman Scott asked Annie about the potential for the City of Somerville to do the same. Annie indicated that the City will work with the CLT to provide what it can to bolster the success of the organization. Given that the process is still in its infant stages, it will be some time before there is an organization to staff, but the group was assured that as the effort continues to grow, the City will provide support along the way as it can.

A few additional items were discussed, such as how this CLT might work together with seniors who may want to engage and benefit from the CLT, but would also like to pass down their property in an easy and simple manner. This is an item of note that will need to be explored further, in addition to the need for

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CLT policies and procedure to be straight-forward and the potential of using tax-deferral or reverse-mortgage programs within the CLT.

There are also a few areas that require follow up from different members, such information on how this CLT might work with US2, the process for the disposition of City land and details on the administration of the Inclusionary housing program. The group would also like some clarity on the status of a report regarding the City's reorganizing of employee offices, so Aldermen Ewen-Campen and Scott will be reaching out to the Capital Projects and Planning department for an update on that. Notes and materials will also be provided to the group on both the Intersections 2018 conference and the National Community Development Association conference along with notes from a meeting with the Champlain Housing Trust prior to the next CLT working group meeting, expected to take place in early November.

Regarding community engagement, the group created a Gmail account specifically for the CLT so that community members who are interested in being involved have a direct line to the group, and eventually the organization. Community engagement efforts at HONK! and SomerStreets were both very successful, as the community expressed strong interest and were quite happy that this is being undertaken. Tabling at SomerStreets went very well, and about half of group members were able to come throughout the event to explain what this model is and why this model will benefit Somerville residents. Responses were very positive, and the group plans to continue to engage the community in various ways as the process continues. The group plans to continue to table at community events and gatherings as well as host information sessions and workshops in the future as research and progress moves forward.

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