

ATHENS AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

September 21, 2020, 12 P.M. Athens City Hall Council Chambers – **Quorum 5**

Attendees: Zach Reizes, Sarah Grace, Noah Trembley, Michelle Papai. Paul Logue, Susan Barga, Joyce Lewis, Shawna Bolin

Guests: Joseph McCabe from Woda-Cooper, Lauren Cooper, Intern from City Planner's office

- I. **Establish Quorum** – S. Grace. Called to Order: 12:10
- II. **Disposition of Minutes** – P. Logue made Motion to approve the minutes, S. Barga seconded, motion carried.
- III. **Paul Logue, Discussion two new development projects in the city** –
 - a. A few projects that the city has been working on, two currently moving forward on the west side of Athens. Woda Cooper project is just off of 682 and the other project is at University Estates by Cornerstone Builders a builder out of Albany Ohio.
 - b. Woda Cooper Development - this project is a low income housing tax credit project through Ohio Housing Finance Agency. WC has done several of these projects in the region including one on the east side of Athens and the old high school project in Nelsonville. They recently met with the Disability Commission and explained their design elements regarding accessibility, universal design, and transportation to obtain the support of that organization
 - c. The University Estates project is affordable housing (though not low income or tax credit), with universal design features, and shared wall design. This is being made possible through a TIF model. Plan is for about 50 townhouse-style market housing (not tax credit) units on lots at University Estates. TIF will absorb some of the infrastructure costs like street, curb, gutter, sidewalk, taps, etc. Must be owner occupied for first 5 years. Opening price point is \$175,000. The townhome style allows for increased density.
 1. Susan wondered about the timeframe for breaking ground. Paul responded that the TIF legislation had just been introduced in committee in Council and would take several weeks to be voted on. No permits have been applied for yet. Might start late fall with construction in earnest next summer.
 2. Susan asked about the possibility of a home owners association because those sometimes come with significant fees. Paul does not believe that there is a plan for one, but will look into in. The units will be fee simple (not condominiums), but will have shared walls and roofs.
 3. Sarah asked about universal design plans given the multi-level design of these units. Paul said that the developer has been provided with universal design expectations and though they will be multi-level, there will be 1st floor master bedrooms, 40 or 42 inch wide halls, zero-grade entries, etc.
 4. Shawna asked if there is a communication plan to share with the public the progress that is happening as well as spreading the word about what will be available. Paul says not at this time. Shawna thinks perhaps a message that includes important elements of these projects (universal design, number of units, price points). Sarah agrees that this seems like a good idea. Perhaps a statement soon regarding the Woda Cooper project and a second one later after more details of the University Estates project are finalized. Paul pointed out that we need to wait until all necessary action by Council has been finalized as well as the annexation for Woda Cooper.
 5. From Paul, the Zoning Commission is forwarding a recommendation to Council that the real estate be zoned R3, multi-unit residential, which will enable the project to move forward as planned.
 - d. Joe McCabe provided some details on the Woda Cooper project
 1. 107 units affordable total located on the west side of 682 across from University Estates Blvd

2. WC's market study indicates that they could build 4-5 projects of this size and still not max out the demand.
3. Site plan shows two divisions of the development on either side of the pond on the property 51 units on one side 56 on the other. There multiple options for fitness on site – bike and walking trails, fitness center as well as on-site maintenance, and education and outreach space.
4. The project addresses multiple things – affordability, aging in place, universal design, green design – LEED certified goal is Silver or higher
5. Tenants must meet specific criteria
 - a. Member of household must have a verifiable income
 - b. Targeted toward those with an earned income between \$14,800-\$56,400
 - c. Upper end matches current workforce needs
 - d. Individuals must go through a background and credit verification process. A compliance team verifies source of income and checks into things like bank assets.
 - e. State also does auditing also, so WC needs to be thorough.
 - f. Under Federal law, for Tax Credit housing head of household may not be full time student, but may be part time student. A full-time student may live in the property, but may not be head of household.
6. 12 fully accessible units in addition to sight and hearing impaired units at the property. All ground floor units are roll-in ADA friendly. Even upper floor units have all of those criteria as well (minus the roll-in aspect).
7. WC is a build own sustain. They manage their properties. Therefore, they build in features to allow for future adaptability. Very focused in on needs of the population they serve (30-80% AMI). Plan for an initial life of at least 30 years.
8. Working with HAPCAP for transportation. May be able to have a bus stop actually on the property. Will have designated parking and pick up locations for other on-demand transportation options.
9. Rent ranges currently estimated: for 30% AMI qualified tenant in a 1-bedroom \$230 up to \$850 for a 3-bedroom. These change a bit year to year as HUD sets ranges
10. WC would like to work with us to coordinate public statement.
11. Shawna asked if these are for purchase. WC is only a rental developer.
12. Noah asked if WC accepts HUD (ie section 8 voucher). Yes, but the resident must still have adequate verifiable income. Verification process applies to entire household. WC does have qualifying residents who receive housing assistance.
13. Susan asked about inclusion of a playground and green space for children. Have looked to see if there is adequate flat space for a small playground, but currently there is recreational space, not playground. Most of the residents tend to be older, so classroom (for health and nutrition classes for example also recently especially classes on use of technology) space and walking trails tend to be prioritized.
14. Optimistic timeline: complete annexation process in the winter, full plan review late winter/spring, break ground late spring/early summer 2021, 13 month construction, so move-in in the warm weather months of 2022.

- ii. Michele Papai asked a question regarding the composition of the board. Sarah clarified that Susan has made contact with an individual in the banking industry and that connection will be made with Molly Fitzgerald the new Director of the ACEDC to fill the two vacancies.

IV. **Adjourn** – Shawna Bolin made a motion to adjourn. Susan Barga seconded the motion, the motion carried.