



VILLAGE HILL NORTHAMPTON CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mayor's Office

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State Senator Stanley C. Rosenberg
Ex-Officio

State Representative Peter Kocot
Ex-Officio

Mary Clare Higgins, Mayor
City of Northampton

David Narkewicz
City Council Industrial Affairs Committee

David Modzelewski
Department of Mental Health

Reverend R. Leroy Moser
*National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
of Western Mass., Inc.*

Rutherford H. Platt
*National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
of Western Mass., Inc.*

Edward Skroski
Northampton Development Corporation

Charles DeRose
Northampton Development Corporation

Daniel Yacuzzo
Northampton Chamber of Commerce

Bruce Fogel, Esq.
Northampton Chamber of Commerce

Michael Rabourn
Northampton Labor Council

John W. Hornor
Northampton Housing Partnership

Francis A. Johnson
Northampton Planning Board

David Drake
Historical Preservation

Joe Blumenthal
Route 66 Neighborhood Representative

Harriet Diamond
Grove Street Neighborhood Representative

Jami Albro-Fisher
Route 10 Neighborhood Representative

MEETING MINUTES

Joint Meeting:

Citizens Advisory Committee Planning Board Housing Partnership

Monday, December 1, 2008
7:00 pm

John F. Kennedy Middle School Community Room

Present: All members of the Citizens Advisory Committee

<i>Name:</i>	<i>As representative of:</i>
Mayor Mary Clare Higgins	City of Northampton
David Narkewicz	City Council's Industrial Affairs Committee (now called Economic Development, Housing and Land Use Committee)
David Modzelewski	Department of Mental Health
Rutherford Platt	National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
Reverend R. Leroy Moser	National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
Edward Skroski	Northampton Development Corporation
Charles DeRose	Northampton Development Corporation
Daniel Yacuzzo	Northampton Chamber of Commerce
Bruce Fogel, Esq.	Northampton Chamber of Commerce
Michael Rabourn	Northampton Labor Council
John W. Hornor	Northampton Housing Partnership
Francis A. Johnson	Northampton Planning Board
David Drake	Historical Preservation
Joseph Blumenthal	Route 66 Neighborhood
Harriet Diamond	Grove Street Neighborhood
Jami Albro-Fisher	Route 10 Neighborhood

City Staffers & Board Members:

George Kohout	Planning Board Vice-Chair
Katharine Baker	Planning Board
Jennifer Dieringer	Planning Board
Stephen Gilson	Planning Board
Kenneth Jodrie	Planning Board
Keith Wilson	Planning Board
Mark Sullivan	Planning Board
Councilor Maureen Carney	Council's Economic Development, Housing and Land Use Committee
Gordon Shaw	Housing Partnership Chair
Richard Abuza	Housing Partnership
Alan Ells	Housing Partnership
Betsy Siersma	Housing Partnership
Lynne Wallace	Housing Partnership
Deb Jacobs	Tree Committee
Teri Anderson	Economic Development Coordinator
Wayne Feiden	Director of Planning and Development
Carolyn Misch	Senior Land Use Planner/Permits Manager
Peg Keller	Housing & Community Development Senior Planner

Media, Residents & Others:

Lachlan Ziegler	Videotaper for North Street Neighborhood Association
Barbara Blumenthal	Chapel Street
Amy Bookbinder	Grove Avenue, Leeds
Glenn Hein	Hawley Street
Eileen Hirsch	Massasoit Street
Mary Kasper	High Street, Florence
Joel Spiro	Bixby Court
Gene Tacy	North Maple Street, Florence

1. Call to Order

Mayor Higgins called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. She explained that the posted meeting's format: a workshop and not a hearing; therefore there will be no public comment.

2. Housing Affordability Mix and Housing Types/Tax Revenue Generation and City Costs

The original Master Plan called for 50/50 mix of affordable and marketable housing. 75% of rental units are to be affordable. 25% of owner units are to be affordable. Mayor Higgins added that this 50/50 mix was embedded in the RFP and has been a guiding principle ever since.

Jack Hornor, CAC had agreed at the 11/17/08 CAC meeting, at Mayor's request, to compile some questions which could help guide the discussion about housing affordability for the proposed 100 additional units. He read them off:

1. How was the original affordability ratio determined?
2. What is the status of the units approved for Phase I and Phase II? How many have been built vs. permitted? What is the inventory of affordable vs. market units?
3. Has the DMH 15% requirement been met or will the requirement apply to the additional 100 units?
4. Will the original ratio apply to the 10% of units over the 207 (in other words, to the additional 20 units currently allowed under the Master Plan)?
5. What are Northampton's most pressing housing needs – market and affordable – which might be met by the additional units? What possibilities does the available land present?
6. What is the definition of “market rate affordable” as it applies to Northampton? Does this phrase apply to both rental and home ownership?
7. Have multi-family units been considered?

George Kohout, Planning Board: asked everyone to step back and remember that the big task is to revise and amend the Master Plan. The developers are requesting 100 more residential units, not apartments, but houses both bungalow and single-family.

Daniel Yacuzzo, CAC: Given the acreage they have, the only way the developers are able to reach the 101 housing number is to build bungalows and townhouses on the North Campus instead of single-family homes.

Richard Abuza, Housing Partnership: All of you have been working on this project for longer and in more detail than I. The City's goal is to increase its affordable housing, Thus, we must recognize Village Hill as a precious resource. I urge you and I urge us all to aim for the deepest affordability but also to aim to preserve the successive affordability options so that what is affordable now will not become market rate when sold.

Bruce Fogel, Esq., CAC: I did not hear any guarantee that there would be a certain number of the three building types once we vote to approve the 100 additional housing units. Speaking to Richard Abuza's thoughts on affordability, this design seems to create single purpose/single income enclaves.

Mayor Higgins, CAC chair: I think the developers have followed our wishes about affordable housing types to the letter.

Jack Hornor, CAC: We used the percentage of 50% affordability but we did not specify house size or the number of housing types. I echo Richard Abuza's point of long-term affordability. The Ice Pond homes have a 99 year affordability deed restriction.

Alan Ells, Housing Partnership: There have been initiatives in the past that started as affordable but there was no transferability of affordability and they slipped into market value.

Harriet Diamond, CAC: Is there any affordability restriction on the units already built?

Mayor Higgins: With State funding sources and tax credits the affordable homes on Village Hill are tied up as affordable for as long as we can.

Daniel Yacuzzo, CAC: This is a 50% increase, a dramatic proposal after only nine years. Did

we move too soon to permit Wright Builders, whose houses are way out of market price? We all were very impressed with the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ certification of those houses and how they would be marketed.

Stephen Gilson, Planning Board: Where did we get the 100 number of additional housing units? Was it MassDevelopment's request?

Mayor Higgins, CAC chair: Yes. I would like to frame their request in terms of the Sustainable Northampton Plan. That site is where people who participated in the sustainability process said they wanted housing density.

Stephen Gilson: I thought we estimated a cost of \$10,000 to educate each child on site. We need to be sure that the City can afford what is built up at Village Hill.

Mayor Higgins: We don't need to hire more police or fire officers for Village Hill. The biggest cost will be snow plowing.

Stephen Gilson: The School budget is roughly half the City's budget. So I think we need to double the amount you show as the City's cost to educate children at Village Hill.

Bruce Fogel, Esq., CAC: If there are houses up there now, the D.P.W. must be serving the area anyway.

Mayor Higgins: Anything to offset those D.P.W. extra costs will help.

Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Development: Northampton has extremes in the housing market; we really don't have houses in the middle price range. If the lots on Village Hill are limited in size, they can't improve or expand much. Thus, they are more likely to remain affordable.

Mayor Higgins: There is very little I can do to expand my 800 square foot house in Laurel Park, which therefore will limit me forever in the price I'm able to seek if I sell it.

Rutherford Platt, CAC: How will the Department of Mental Health distribute its clients so they are not living in one area at Village Hill?

David Modzelewski, CAC: Affordability is an issue in this case as well. DMH's clients need deep subsidies beyond tax credits. The affordable units are too costly for them.

Rutherford Platt: Does DMH do the actual 15% housing unit allocation to your clients?

David Modzelewski: There is an application process and there are waiting lists.

Rutherford Platt: How many DMH clients are there?

David Modzelewski: 7 in Phase One, 8 will be in Phase 2. None are homeowner units.

George Kohout, Planning Board: Will the CAC consider moving that 15% DMH ratio to the 100 additional residential units, or to however many additional residential units you approve?

Mayor Higgins, CAC chair: What does everyone think of starter homes?

Richard Abuza, Housing Partnership: It is a great component of the affordability mix. Home ownership is wonderful but real affordability should be the goal.

Daniel Yacuzzo, CAC: I like the idea of starter homes. Everything prepared by MassDevelopment was home ownership, which confounds the affordability issue.

Harriet Diamond, CAC: Starter homes sound like a good idea, but how does the affordability work if the unit later is resold?

Jack Hornor, CAC: a deed restriction with an affordability requirement attached to the deed.

David Drake, CAC: A deed restriction for an affordable home does not equal a starter home

because you can't build equity. I am in favor of the starter home concept.

Jack Hornor: Mayor Higgins mentioned her home in Laurel Park being kept affordable by its very small size. She always will be limited as to what she can sell it for because there is very little room for expansion. I am wondering if this always is true.

Rutherford Platt, CAC: The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in Roxbury has been able to maintain cultural as well as socioeconomic diversity.

See <http://www.dsni.org/history.shtml>

Mayor Higgins: My concern is that there will be 100 deeply affordable units and 100 at market rate. What about families in the middle?

Betsy Siersma, Housing Partnership: In its informal phone survey the Partnership found that the most needed housing in Northampton is single room occupancy units (SRO's) and affordable home ownership.

Keith Wilson, Planning Board: How will we ensure that those in need are given the chance to buy the affordable homes, and not a single man with a good income?

Mayor Higgins: We cannot.

Harriet Diamond, CAC: A small house in Northampton could become very expensive as the need for such units increases. So we need to preserve a certain percentage of these houses as affordable.

Mayor Higgins: The Village Hill developers recently have said that they wish to build bungalows next.

Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Development: The Master Plan we see is based on the CAC's approving the 100 additional residential units. If the CAC does not agree and wants the developers to stick to the 227 housing units, MassDevelopment will reexamine its options. The bungalows will be spiffier and on larger lots.

Katharine Baker, Planning Board: The percentage makes sense to me, but where are the units placed? Neighborhoods of mostly one type of building do not give the feel of a mixed village.

Mayor Higgins, CAC chair: I disagree. Everything up at the site is approximately a 5-minute walk away.

Keith Wilson, Planning Board: The higher the density there, the more attractive will public transportation become. Is the density we are looking at now enough to support a walkable, public transport supported neighborhood?

Jack Hornor, CAC: MassDevelopment's drawing shows 62 additional units, yet they have requested 100 units. Where will they fit 38 additional single-family houses?

City Councilor Maureen Carney, Housing Partnership: What are the features of these starter-home sized affordable units?

Mayor Higgins, CAC chair: 900-1200 square feet and \$300,000 and under. Part of MassDevelopment's reason for the 100 additional units is to afford them some wiggle room without having to undergo the Mass. Environmental Policy Act Office (MEPA) process twice.

George Kohout, Planning Board: What drives this proposed revision of the Master Plan? Is it that the developers will not build the remaining 105 housing units until the City approves the

additional 100?

Mayor Higgins, CAC chair: People who might buy at Village Hill want to see what the rest of the site will look like. And the builders already there want to know what the rest of the site will look like. People want to know what the neighborhood will be before they commit.

Bruce Fogel, Esq., CAC: The challenge we collectively must make is the goal of affordable housing balanced by the market. The conceptual mix is hard for me to envision as a long-time Forbes Avenue resident, where you see every type and size house and lot on the same street.

Keith Wilson, Planning Board: The bungalows won't necessarily be its own district.

Bruce Fogel, Esq.: Another concern is the formula being maintained: 50/50 mix of affordable and marketable housing. 75% of rental units are to be affordable. 25% of owner units are to be affordable.

Mayor Higgins, CAC chair: Do you feel the 50/50 ratio must be carried through to the 100 additional residential housing units?

Frandy Johnson, CAC: What is the ideal affordability ratio in Northampton?

Mayor Higgins: We are at 11% now. If you say that the 50/50 ratio need not carry over to the 100 extra units, there still is 33% affordability for the entire project.

Daniel Yacuzzo, CAC: 20% of what is required under Chapter 40B will be on that campus.

Alan Ells, Housing Partnership: How many affordable units does the City need to remain viable? If you build the larger units you are to some degree defining what kind of affordable houses will be built in the future.

David Modzelewski, CAC: What defined affordability in the Ice Pond units?

Lynne Wallace, Housing Partnership: \$189,000.

David Drake, CAC: There needs to be a middle range house price as the market rate and the affordable rate diverge more and more.

Jack Hornor, CAC: Do we want more rental units in the extra 100 housing units or not? Do we want permanent affordability? Do we want market rate?

Lynne Wallace: In other countries these units are called work houses. There must be a methodology we can review.

Katharine Baker, Planning Board: Is there a percentage of affordable housing units that needs to be deed restricted?

Mayor Higgins: I would guess 50%. It is worth the CAC's discussing the work force housing piece with the developers. But I don't think there will be any more State tax credits for additional affordable housing at Village Hill.

Daniel Yacuzzo: The developers will move forward with bungalows only if we revise the Conceptual Master Plan for the 100 additional residential housing units. There is no market place solution unless we approve the 100 additional units.

Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Development: If the CAC does not approve them, like any developer MassDevelopment will go back to estate lot units with a larger monetary return.

Rutherford Platt, CAC: If we approve the 100 additional units we solve as well the issue of the three brick albatrosses that could be rehabbed with a good amount of investment.

Mayor Higgins, CAC chair: Is anyone saying we should stick with the 50/50 ratio?

No.

Mayor Higgins: Is there anyone opposed to work force houses?

No.

George Kohout, Planning Board: I think I heard Partnership members say this is our last chance in fifteen to twenty years to get more affordable housing in Northampton.

Mayor Higgins: I disagree. The Partnership is working right now on more affordable housing. Development is going on all the time. I just attended the opening of Valley CDC's 8 affordable rental units on School Street.

Richard Abuza, Housing Partnership: However many additional units are approved will not relieve the prior ratio.

Mayor Higgins: No.

City Councilor Maureen Carney, Housing Partnership: It would be helpful to define terms such as workforce housing. Are we implying a certain income level when we use the term?

Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Development: Many of you have been on City boards for a long time and remember when the City created accessory apartments. Many communities require them to be deed restricted, but those units did not move because the paperwork and process are too cumbersome.

George Kohout, Planning Board: I must raise a counterpoint argument to your statements about there being no need to increase police and especially fire staff and equipment with 100 additional residential units.

Mayor Higgins, CAC chair: The two chiefs are always requesting new and updated equipment and did so before development began at Village Hill. The City already follows an equipment replacement schedule. As for staffing, there are more police problems in the subdivisions already permitted on the City's outskirts.

Stephen Gilson, Planning Board: Has anyone asked to develop at the site?

Teri Anderson, Economic Development Coordinator: Yes, but not recently. Kollmorgen has taken over some of the previously available locations.

Stephen Gilson: Are you considering studio space only or live/work?

Teri Anderson: Live/work space.

Stephen Gilson: Only in that building in the back?

Teri Anderson: Yes, in order to maintain the mix.

3. Job Creation

Bruce Fogel, Esq., CAC: My concern: I always envisioned new jobs and not retained jobs. I say that as someone who fully endorsed Kollmorgen's move to Village Hill. Now that commercial space is down to 361,000 square feet, I am unable to mesh that with the 327 residential units.

Mayor Higgins, CAC chair: The RFP mentioned retained jobs.

Teri Anderson, Economic Development Coordinator: It has always been new and retained jobs. Look at the tax revenue for the reduced commercial footage. It actually is more than the full buildout tax revenue under the original Master Plan. The revised Master Plan still meets the same goals.

Daniel Yacuzzo, CAC: My concern is that we won't see the value of jobs. Kollmorgen leaves its King Street space with severe limitations. Its 250 jobs at an average salary of \$75,000 will not be duplicated by whoever moves into their King Street location.

Katharine Baker, Planning Board: Will Kollmorgen's employees be interested in workforce houses?

Mayor Higgins: Those employees will be able to afford higher priced houses, I expect.

4. Alternate Plans – Notre Dame

Mayor Higgins, CAC chair: At the November 17, 2008 meeting of the CAC we said we would review the Notre Dame students' output.

Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Development: Students bring a big picture approach. They also raise larger philosophical discussions:

- They show a large tract of open space. But what kind of open space, tot lots and pocket parks or one large swath of open space?
- Your goal is to knit Village Hill into a neighborhood and that is what the students tried to do. The CAC earlier posited separate neighborhoods and argued about which neighborhood should absorb more traffic. MassDevelopment favors single loaded roads while Notre Dame shows double loaded.

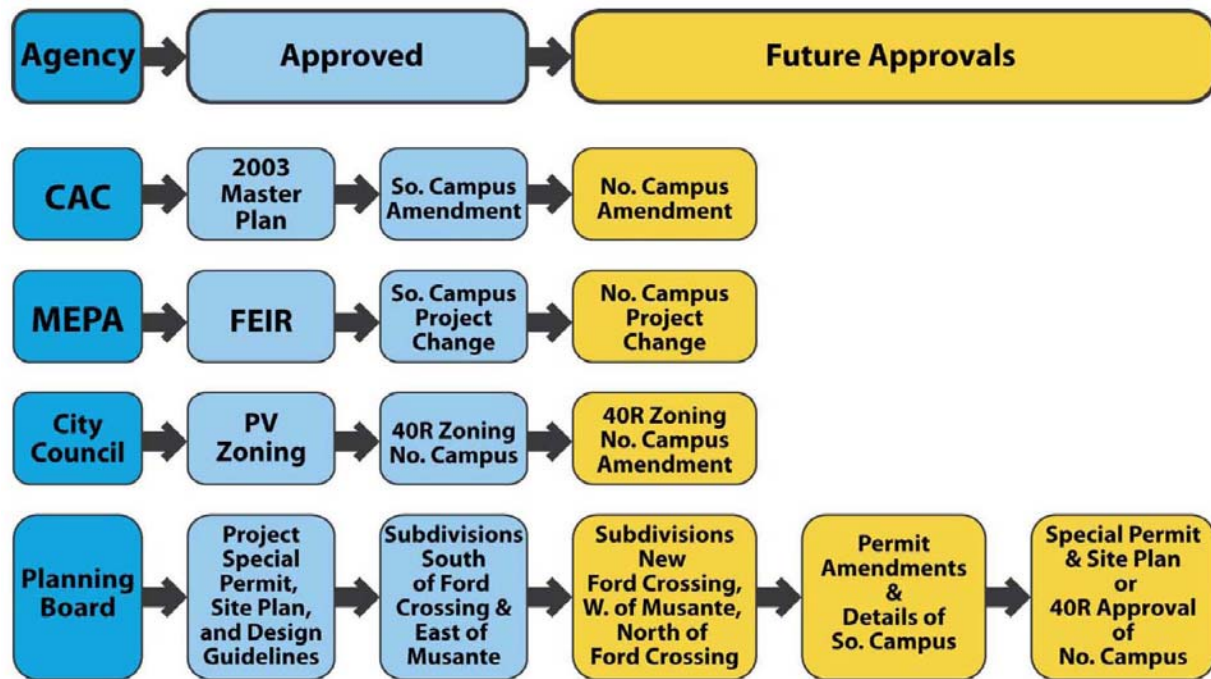
Alan Ells, Housing Partnership: What do you wish to do: Create a community village? Do pocket parks fit better with a community village?

Wayne Feiden: Notre Dame incorporates many alleys throughout the site.

Harriet Diamond, CAC: Notre Dame shows a well-developed Village Hill center, as apposed to Arrowstreet's plan. Notre Dame shows a road moving through the center and culminating in a round circular overview. Arrowstreet decided to bind the site from the perimeter with greenways and walkways.

Rutherford Platt, CAC: To designers it is always July and sunny. How do we foster the sense of community during the worst days of winter with everyone indoors?

5. Master Plan & Permitting Process – Developer, CAC & Planning Bd. Process & roles



Mayor Higgins, CAC chair: If we choose adopt more 40R space that proposal goes before full City Council for a vote.

Stephen Gilson, Planning Board: Here is the problem: When we see these slide pictures we on the Planning Board think the CAC is approving exactly that. When matters come before the Planning Board some members think it is a done deal. Many people do not understand that the Master Plan is not the design. We on Planning Board often feel that when the CAC approves something, its members expect the Planning Board to sign off on that very picture.

Mark Sullivan, Planning Board: My concern is not with what the public thinks, but what the developer thinks if the Planning Board does not act as a rubber stamp to what the CAC already has approved.

Mayor Higgins: That is a fair point.

Charles DeRose, CAC: The City’s Mayor and its planners drive the CAC’s process. The Planning Board has its representative on the CAC; Wayne Feiden and Teri Anderson represent your priorities.

Daniel Yacuzzo, CAC: This is also a moving target for us. We do not get iterations until the very meeting at which we are being asked to vote, just as Planning Board members do.

George Kohout, Planning Board: There are two things that are illustrated that Planning Board members think need more discussion and revision:

- Assisted Living Facility: is the appropriate location right at the front cornerstone?
- The massing of Kollmorgen with a parking lot and only a very small retain component.

Stephen Gilson: That is our confusion. Planning Board members want to conduct the same

process for MassDevelopment as we conduct for any other developer. Just because CAC members have approved something should not influence our decision.

Councilor Narkewicz, CAC: CAC traditionally gets one concept picture. Is it possible to approve multiple scenarios, not plans? Otherwise, we become monolithic when all of this is just a concept. It has never worked out as originally drawn.

Mayor Higgins: I pose that issue to Planning Board members: Do you need multiple pictures?

Councilor Narkewicz: But then we still are forwarding "The Picture" to Planning Board members, as if that rendering already is set in stone. We need to be clear that the CAC approves underlying concepts, not that picture per se.

David Modzelewski, CAC: As a CAC member I expect a whole other process to be undertaken by the Planning Board. CAC does the first cut vetting process, always to be trumped by the Planning Board's decision.

Councilor Narkewicz: In support of this, zoning was created by the Planning Board, and the developers are working within those parameters in whatever they present to the CAC or to the Planning Board.

Bruce Fogel, Esq., CAC: The CAC has commandeered as much power as it can under an unclear statute in order to be the filter system for the process.

Several Planning Board members at once: We think the developers pushes things as having been approved by the CAC.

Several CAC members at once: We get just the opposite impression, that the developers are looking to us for guidance in order to pass muster before the Planning Board.

Katharine Baker, Planning Board: The press plays a role. Planning Board members heard about the Kollmorgen move by reading it in the Daily Hampshire Gazette. We read that it was a conceptual idea already approved by the CAC.

Mayor Higgins, CAC chair: Everyone agrees that the vote in support of the Kollmorgen move should have waited.

Teri Anderson, Economic Development Coordinator: The Planning Board's advocacy of streetscape frontage and not Kollmorgen's building block: Is that a site plan approval issue or a Master Plan change?

6. Next CAC Meeting

Tuesday, December 9, 2008

7:00 p.m.

at John F. Kennedy Middle School in the community room

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously in the affirmative. The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Corinne Philippides
Mayoral Aide
December 9, 2008*