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Acton Community Housing Corporation
Nancy Tavernier, Chairman
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achc@acton-ma.gov

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Nancy Tavernier, Chair, Acton Community Housing Corporation
SUBJECT: Post Office Crossing 40B
DATE: February 19, 2014

It is our understanding that the developers of Post Office Crossing have been invited to the February 24 Board of Selectmen meeting to present an abbreviated overview of their project that is currently being heard by the Zoning Board of Appeals. We are aware of the issues raised by the Board at its February 3 meeting. We would like to reassure the Board that this is the same project supported by the ACHC and the Selectmen in October of 2012. I am attaching ACHC's recent letters of support sent to the Zoning Board of Appeals that will give you some background on our involvement in the permitting process.

The Local Initiative Program (LIP) application that was signed by both of our boards in the Fall of 2012 was filed with the state Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) in early 2013. The Local Initiative Program (LIP), also known as a Friendly 40B, is a state program that encourages the creation of affordable housing by motivating communities and developers to work together to create affordable housing that serves households at or below 80% of the area median income. In exchange for the developer's willingness to work with the town up front, negotiating such things as design and density, the expectation is the approval process will be streamlined.

This proposed development has had some delays in the permitting process, among them a pause to assess the real estate market and wait for it to settle down. As we have seen with the current Acton Meadows and Quail Ridge developments, their units are selling like hotcakes so this is an advantageous time to enter the marketplace. The delay has been costly to the developers however and further delays will only increase that cost. The ZBA appears to be ready to move forward on March 3 at the continued hearing for this project.

The ACHC and the Town can take pride in the process we have established for the development of affordable housing. ACHC has created a Development Guide that offers step-by-step guidance for developers who are using the DHCD LIP program. The Post Office Crossing developers have followed the Guide every step of the way and have gone above and beyond to welcome the input from such boards as the Design Review Board.

Now that we are involved in the Regional Housing Services Office, we see an added bonus to the LIP program. The DHCD and the Town have jointly approved Regulatory Agreements with each LIP developer, which allows the Regional Housing Services Office to monitor compliance with those projects annually. This highly regulated program serves the Town well. Our point is we want to continue to support developers who are willing to work with the Town to make a project as good as possible. The Post Office Crossing developers have embraced this collaborative approach.

To summarize our message:

- The developers have chosen to use the DHCD LIP process working collaboratively with the town
- This is the same project of 12 single family homes presented in 2012, 2013 and 2014.
- The design of the homes and the layout has been approved by the ACHC and the Design Review Board in multiple meetings.
- A commitment has been made to build a LEED certified development
- The ACHC and the Board of Selectmen endorsed the project in 2012 and signed the application to DHCD
- There is great value to the town and ACHC to retain a commitment to the LIP process
- Concerns expressed by town departments are being addressed at the ZBA hearings
- This parcel is adjacent to over 200 acres of residentially zoning land, half of which is in the Affordable Housing Overlay District
- This parcel is on a private street that has sidewalks, a traffic light and more sidewalks connecting the area to Acton Center services and play areas and is less than a mile to services on Great Rd.

The Acton Community Housing Corporation urges you to continue your support for Post Office Crossing and to submit comments to the ZBA for their March 3 hearing. As always, we thank you for your continued support of ACHC's efforts to facilitate affordable housing.

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TO: Ken Kozik, Chair, Acton Board of Appeals
FROM: Nancy Tavernier, Chair, Acton Community Housing Corporation
SUBJECT: Follow-up Comments - Hearing #13-06 Comprehensive Permit 6 Post Office Sq
DATE: January 21, 2014

The Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) voted in August 2012 to recommend the twelve unit 40B proposal, Post Office Crossing, located at 6 Post Office Square. We submitted comments to the ZBA on December 27 that gave a qualified recommendation for the proposed development submitted to the Town in November 2013. We suggest that you reread our comments from December 27 and consider this follow-up an update to the last paragraph in those comments.

Our hesitation in December was due to our uncertainty about whether this was the same project we had strongly supported in 2012 because the architectural, landscape and LEED plans were not included in the filing. The development team met with ACHC on January 16 and we are happy to report that our concerns have been addressed and we are satisfied that this is the identical design we previously reviewed and supported. Therefore, ACHC voted to submit these revised comments to you indicating our **full support** for the Post Office Crossing Comprehensive Permit.

ACHC reviews proposals by concentrating on the affordable housing issues. Our focus is on the design of the units, the appropriateness of the location, the affordable prices, and the overall feasibility of the proposal. To reiterate the points from our December comments, we support:

- the willingness of the developer to do a Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Local Initiative Program (LIP) project which creates a collaborative process with the town.
- they willingly accepted suggestions on design and site layout that came from the ACHC, the attendees at the information session, and the Design Review Board.
- the location, which is in close proximity to existing infrastructure such as a traffic light and sidewalks to be used to access services in Acton Center and Great Road.
- the developer's commitment to doing a full LEED certified project.

There may be other issues that the developer needs to address during the approval process from other departments but ACHC is satisfied that our concerns have been addressed. We fully support the project and urge the ZBA to streamline the approval process.

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TO: Ken Kozik, Chair, Acton Board of Appeals
FROM: Nancy Tavernier, Chair, Acton Community Housing Corporation
SUBJECT: Comments - Hearing #13-06 Comprehensive Permit 6 Post Office Square
DATE: December 27, 2013

The Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) voted in August 2012 to recommend the twelve unit 40B proposal, Post Office Crossing, located at 6 Post Office Square. This project is a DHCD Local Initiative Program (LIP) project also called a Friendly 40B. We first started meeting with the developers from Charing Cross Realty Trust of Salem, MA in April 2012. There were three meetings with the ACHC, two meetings with the department heads, an information session for abutters, town board members, and the general public, and two meetings with the Design Review Board. There were design changes recommended during the review process but there were no major concerns raised at any of those meetings.

The developers followed ACHC's Guidelines for Affordable Housing Development and the project was also consistent with the Selectmen and Planning Board's Comprehensive Permit Policy which states a preference for small scale in-fill development of twelve units or less.

The Post Office Crossing site is a vacant 3.6 acre parcel located across from the Post Office and to the left of the Wellesley Therapeutic Services building on Post Office Square. The development is proposed to be twelve single family homes, including three affordable units, each with roughly 2400 square feet of living space. Each will have three bedrooms, garages, and a fee simple form of ownership. There are no direct residential abutters. While the land is zoned for light industrial it is the Comprehensive Permit process that allows it to be used for housing. As part of the Comprehensive Permit requirements, 25% of the units must be sold as affordable deed restricted units to first time homebuyers. These working families must meet income and asset guidelines to qualify for purchase, with incomes up to 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). The maximum income for a household of four is $67,350.

Whenever the ACHC reviews 40B developments, we look for the positive features above and beyond the provision of affordable units. The first feature for this project was the willingness by the developer to do a Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Local Initiative Program (LIP) project which creates a collaborative process with the town in exchange for a streamlined approval process. The approval process was very smooth with the Board of

Selectmen voting to sign the LIP Application in October 2012. The developers willingly accepted suggestions on design and site layout that came from the ACHC, the attendees at the information session, and the Design Review Board. Another plus is the location, which is in close proximity to existing infrastructure such as a traffic light and sidewalks to be used to access services in Acton Center and Great Road. The most important feature that led to the support of the ACHC and the Selectmen was the developer's willingness to commit to doing a full LEED certified project. It is our expectation that all twelve homes, including the affordable units, would be LEED certified.

After the Selectmen endorsed the project in October of 2012, the proposed development seems to have languished. The LIP application was not filed with DHCD until March 2013. The LIP application was extremely comprehensive and essentially ZBA-filing-ready at that time. A DHCD site visit was made in May 2013 at which time more information was requested of the developer. The site eligibility letter was issued by DHCD in August 2013. The application for the Comprehensive Permit was filed with the ZBA on November 13, 2013.

We note that there are several important pieces missing from the application, most notably the architectural plans, the landscaping plan, and information on plans for LEED construction. These were all previously included in the LIP application. We are not certain whether the filed plan is the same one that we originally endorsed so we are submitting a qualified recommendation for Post Office Crossing at this time. We would expect to comment further once the missing pieces are filed with the ZBA. We will then review the proposed project to be sure it matches the original plan that was unanimously endorsed by the Selectmen and the Acton Community Housing Corporation.