



For Immediate Release

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Hamilton Host Community Agreement Paves the Way

Beverly, MA, November 17, 2016: The Town of Hamilton has paved the way for innovation and clarity in the town's future of housing affordable housing development. The creation of the first of its kind Host Community Agreement (HCA) is a unique approach focused on responsible and responsive development of the community's housing goals. This Host Agreement will serve to guide housing along with the existing town Housing Production Plan created in 2013.

The genesis of the Host Agreement was to allow the town to effectively manage 40B projects while working proactively with affordable housing developers. In this way, the Town is able to avoid unfriendly and contextually insensitive 40B projects without Town foreknowledge, which is especially important to the effort's goal to create affordable housing that aligns with the fabric of the community. The Commonwealth's Chapter 40B is the state's Affordable Housing Zoning Law and is designed to encourage the production of affordable housing in all MA cities and towns, having a minimum of 10% of their housing inventory as affordable.

As Hamilton Planning Director Patrick Reffett states, "We are fully aware that the Town needs to make some major strides in creating affordable housing in Town. We believe that working with cooperative developers such as Harborlight Community Partners who understand the community and its needs will allow us to reach our mutual missions without the common frictions and development impacts."

From the perspective of Harborlight Community Partners of Beverly, one of the first affordable housing developers to sign Hamilton's new Host Agreement, this is a step in a positive direction. Andrew DeFranza, Executive Director of Harborlight Community Partners (HCP) states, "The effort is very unique and proactive for a smaller town, and is heartening to see this come to fruition. This is a step toward reaching the town's affordable housing goals in a way that takes into consideration such housing needs in a contextually sensitive manner."

Hamilton asserts a number of priorities within the Host Community Agreement, including maximization of local resident preference according to DHCD regulations as well as a strong interest in senior housing. In addition, another notable aspect of the agreement is that it is not an exclusive one, allowing the

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engagement of multiple developers who are interested in cooperating with the Town in such an arrangement.

The agreement also targets the safe harbor production rate (as reflected by the Housing Production Plan) of developed units per year is another important aspect of the Host Community Agreement for the Town. For Hamilton, this number equates to roughly 15 units per year. The Town understands that developers build projects based on schedules predicated on their financing and other project schedules but the Town desires that developers work toward addressing the safe harbor production schedule in a “friendly” way that helps to reduce development impact at any one given time and upon the environment around the project area.

Andrew DeFranza, Executive Director of Harborlight Community Partners, is pleased with the progress and thoughtful process which resulted in this agreement. “Working together we are confident that a mix of affordable housing for families and seniors is possible in a way that can meet the Housing Production Goals over time,” DeFranza stated.

Finally, and perhaps of utmost importance, the Host Community Agreement seeks to ensure that the Town and affordable housing developers work together in a respectful, reasonable manner which epitomizes “friendly” 40b project coordination among the parties.

“At Harborlight, we couldn’t agree more and are firmly dedicated to a transparent and open process when it comes to housing development,” says DeFranza. “Our goal, at the end of every process, is always simply to make places for people to live affordably on the North Shore. Seniors, working families, people who live and work here who struggle with the high cost of living. If we can do this in a mutually agreeable and seamless way, everyone benefits, and no one more so than those in need.”

Reffett also mentioned, “We are impressed with the thoughtful consideration and on-going cooperation that Harborlight Executive Director DeFranza has extended to the Community, town staff and the residents we serve. Harborlight’s formal commitment to the Town via the HCA is evidence of his and HCP’s desire to work proactively with us to reach our common goals.”

About Harborlight Community Partners, Inc.

Harborlight Community Partners (HCP) provides quality affordable housing for low income people living on the North Shore. Located in eight communities, HCP supports the housing needs of the region's underserved population by creating, preserving and managing over 360 safe, quality affordable housing units with supportive services. For more information, visit www.harborlightcp.org.

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