BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG PRESS RELEASE
May 17, 2018

On Thursday, May 17, 2018, the Borough of Watchung Council held a second public meeting to discuss its affordable housing plan. On May 3, 2018, the Borough Council previously held the first public meeting on the proposed housing plan. The Borough worked diligently to address affordable housing through the New Jersey Superior Court and with the Fair Share Housing Center. The Borough Planners presented various mechanisms to meet the Borough's Present Need, the Prior Round (1987 -1999) and the Third Round (1999-2025) affordable housing obligations and Unmet Need.

The Borough's Present Need obligation is 4 units of existing deficient housing, as adjusted from 30 units as originally specified. The Borough will continue its municipal Housing Rehabilitation Program to satisfy this requirement.

The Borough's Prior Round obligation is 206 affordable units; however, an approved 1997 Vacant Land Inventory reduced the Borough's obligation to a Realistic Development Potential of 169 affordable units with 37 units of Unmet Need. Watchung Borough's Prior Round plan was previously certified by the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) in 1997. There remains 18 affordable units to completely address this Prior Round obligation. These 18 affordable units are known as Unmet Need, which is the difference between the Borough's Realistic Development Potential and the calculated Prior Round Obligation. The Borough is required to address Unmet Need to the extent possible, given the lack of suitable, available and developable lands.

The Borough's Third Round obligation is 396 affordable units. However, an updated Vacant Land Inventory, which identified the limited, vacant, suitable developable lands in the Borough, reduced this obligation to 53 units. There is also a remaining Third Round Unmet Need of 335 units.

In summary, the Borough of Watchung's affordable housing obligation is based upon its remaining Realistic Development Potential of 18 units in the Prior Round and 53 units in the Third Round or a total of 71 units, plus 4 units of Present Need and 37 units of Unmet Need in the Prior Round and 335 units in the Third Round or a total of 372 units of Unmet Need.

The proposed BNE Development Group inclusionary development will address most of the Borough's obligation with 46 affordable rental apartments as part of a 230 unit rental apartment community. With the BNE plan, there will be a small surplus that will be credited to the Borough's Unmet Need. The proposed BNE plan will be subject to further Borough review and will require a detailed Redevelopment Plan to establish the zoning and design parameters.

With the proposed BNE development and other existing affordable housing units, and the on-going Accessory Apartment program, the Borough expects to meet its affordable housing obligation with a surplus of 8 affordable units.

The Borough plans to address its Unmet Need of 372 units by the following mechanisms:

- Mandatory Borough-wide set-aside ordinance providing that any residential development of 5 or more units at a density above 6 units per acre would require an affordable unit setaside.
- Route 22 Affordable Housing Overlay Zone encompassing the Liccardi Ford and a portion of the Mount Saint Mary properties, which would retain the existing zoning, but would permit multi-family housing with a minimum affordable housing set-aside.
- Somerset Street/Watchung Avenue Overlay Zone for the 'triangle area,' which would retain the existing commercial zoning, but would allow mixed use development with a minimum affordable housing set-aside.
- Existing Accessory Apartment regulations to be amended to specify accessory affordable apartments as permitted, not conditional uses.

The Borough's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan including a Spending Plan, the required ordinances, a Redevelopment Plan for the proposed BNE development, will require review and approval by the Borough Council, the Planning Board, and the Superior Court. The attached tables detail the proposed credits, bonuses and adjustments that address the Borough's Prior Round and Third Round affordable housing obligations.

Table 1 Proposed Credits/Bonuses/Adjustments that Address the Prior Round Obligation Revised 4/19/2018	
Prior Cycle Obligation (1987 -1999)	**206**
Realistic Development Potential (RDP)	**169**
Johnston Drive Group Home	3
Existing Lakeside Villas at Watchung (a.k.a. Villa Dominico) Age-Restricted Apartments	8
Regional Contribution Agreement to Phillipsburg	57
The Point at Watchung (a.k.a. Kings Crossing/Crystal Ridge/Avalon at Watchung) Rental Apartments	40
Rental Bonus	43
Accessory Apartment Program	10
TomTom Realty (Berlant Somerset Street) Rental Family Apartments	3
BNE Real Estate Group [Karka/Philips (Lachs)] Rental Family Apartments	5
TOTAL	**169**
BALANCE	**0**
UNMET NEED (1987-1999)	**37***

* Unmet Need (1987-1999) 206 – 169 = 37

Table 2 Proposed Credits/Bonuses/Adjustments that Address the Third Round Obligation 4/19/2018	
Third Round Obligation (1999 – 2025)	**396**
Realistic Development Potential (RDP):	**53**
Brandywine at Mountain Ridge Assisted Living Apartments	2
Watchung Associates, LLC Apartments	4
BNE Real Estate Group (Karka/Philips/Lachs) Rental Apartments	41**
Rental Bonus	14
TOTAL	**61**
SURPLUS CREDITS to Address Future Obligations and Unmet Need	**8**
UNMET NEED (1999 -2025) * **	**335**

** BNE Real Estate Group totals 46 affordable unit credits. This comprises 5 credits included in the Prior Round Obligation and 41 credits included in the Third Round RDP.

***Unmet Need (1999-2025) 396 – Total Affordable Credits (61) = 335