

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

Meeting Minutes

June 21, 2023

ATTENDEES: Steve Irish, Chair; Nancy Chapman; Maura Curran, Elizabeth Howie and James Duff. Ruth Wagner was absent.

Additional Attendees: Shari Young, Administrative Assistant

Public Attendees:

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

Mr. Irish moved to accept the agenda, Ms. Chapman seconded the motion; a vote was taken and was unanimously in favor.

Meeting Minutes: March 2023 and May 2023

Mr. Irish moved to approve the March 2023 the minutes, Ms. Chapman seconded the motion; a vote was taken and was unanimously in favor.

Mr. Irish moved to approve the March 2023 the minutes, Ms. Howie seconded the motion; a vote was taken and was unanimously in favor.

Introductions: New Member James Duff

Each member gave a brief background of themselves and Mr. Duff introduced himself to the group.

Mr. Irish has been on the Trust since 2015 and has been Chair since then; he has 27 yrs. of experience in mortgages.

Ms. Howie has been on the Trust for 1 ½ yrs. her back ground is in commercial real estate, she then went into interior design, currently she is working as the paint specialist at local hardware store; affordable housing has always been one of her interests.

Ms. Curran is a member of the Select Board and is a voting member of the Trust; she commented that as a Trust the AHT has more flexibility to do more things. She commented that the AHT is a difficult initiative in town, but this group has been able to accomplish a lot of little things; i.e. small single-family homes and Lawson Green was one of the biggest accomplishments.

Ms. Chapman said her background is public housing, low income housing, property management and social services and is a long time Scituate resident and has been on the trust for 5 yrs. This is her last meeting as she did not seek re-appointment at the end of her term.

Mr. Duff said he is a Community Banker, a commercial lender, he primarily does large development projects, i.e. 40Bs, 40Rs, Subdivisions, Condos, affordable and market rate. He has also served 6 yrs. on the Board of Directors of the South Shore Housing Development Corp. (aka Neighborworks). He served 6 yrs. on the Board of Habitat for Humanity, so he has done both large- and small-scale projects.

Mr. Irish gave a brief update of the types of projects and initiatives the Trust has been working on to bring Mr. Duff up to date.

- Working with the Developer of 7 New Driftway to develop a parcel of land in the AHT's ownership for a 5-bedroom group home; all bedrooms will be count as a unit to the Town's Subsidize Housing Inventory
 - Lot located on Stockbridge Road, has been vacant since 2017
 - Original AHT had purchased 2 lots with hope to build on them
 - One lot was developed with a partnership from a development in Humarock
- Basis for AHT funds is from CPC
 - Use is restricted
 - Currently AHT has about \$500K
- Administering a \$25,000 Repair Grant Program
 - 8-10 grants were awarded
 - Had 25 applicants
 - Grantees have one year to use the grant
 - Currently have paid about \$11K
 - Pilot program funds were received from Town Meeting
 - Program is similar to program that is in Norwell
 - Consultant was hired to navigate the process
- Housing Production Plan on the Town Website
 - Small Repairs Grant Program was taken from the HPP
- COVID Rent Relief Program
 - Received \$100K from CPC, but money was rescinded as program never was utilized
- AHT needs to figure out what is next
 - Looking for alternative funding sources instead of relying on CPC
 - Trust was established with CPC funds, but would like to find other sources
 - CPC funding has restrictions
 - Small Repairs Grant Program (SRGP) for Deed Restricted Properties only is on up for discussion

DISCUSSION: Alternative Funding Sources

Mr. Irish indicated the AHT is technically a non-profit, a political subdivision of the State, charitable contributions are tax deductible under a certain Section. The Trust is not a 501C non-profit, but it is a tax-exempt organization. The information as to the type of organization the Trust is considered is needed in order to potentially fill out some grant applications for alternative funding sources.

Ms. Howie opined if the Trust is going to go after some money, there needs to be a course of action in mind. The Trust should start brainstorming what they want to do from the grandest ideas to the easiest and prioritize from there.

Mr. Duff mentioned a Down Payment Assistance Plan citing a location on the Cape, where funds were used to purchase a home at market rate, but then it was resold as an affordable unit through CPC or Housing Trust entity; a market rate house was turned into an affordable house.

Mr. Irish said the AHT kind of did that years ago with a property on Nelson Ave.; Trust had purchased one condo unit for a particular price and held the price down when the AHT sold it to be able to hit more people. Property may have been a foreclosure and was vacant for many years, but the AHT sold it for less than what market rate would have been.

Mr. Irish said that is an option for the Trust funds, but in order to build something or buy land the AHT would have to partner with someone.

Ms. Chapman said when looking for grants it is important to know what kind of organizations the grant gives money to; it will impact how a grant application is written.

The AHT is researching different funds; google search. Previously the AHT had discussed finding more information on JC Weinberg Trust, Mr. Irish also thought of Cochran out of Boston as an option to research.

Mr. Irish said family rental housing is something the AHT could put on their list to work on; but, they would have to partner with a developer.

Ms. Curran suggested getting a list of the available land in Town.

Ms. Chapman said the AHT had also talked about rentals to teachers, first responders that work in town, that can't find affordable housing.

DISCUSSION: Small Repairs Grant Program

AHT is still administering the first round of the program. The discussion was to be about if the AHT wanted to fund a round of the SRGP for deed restricted properties only and use the current funds available from CPC.

Ms. Howie felt the AHT should spend the money on other things and look for something with a bigger impact; she felt it would be better spent on trying to fund a bigger project, i.e. 6 units somewhere.

Ms. Chapman felt the deed restricted units could benefit from the program and the money has been sitting for a period of time. There was discussion that the program was open to both deed restricted and non-deed restricted properties. The AHT could administer the program to deed restricted properties only, but there were only 2 affordable applicants in the first round and neither one was awarded a grant. The AHT could earmark funds for deed restricted properties if the program was re-opened just to those properties. Ms. Curran is to research if AHT can market just to deed restricted properties.

Once information on if marketing can be done to just deed restricted properties AHT will discuss if they want to administer the SRGP again.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ms. Curran said she and Mr. Boudreau had a meeting with the Grantham Group, partners with Lawson Green, regarding Old Gates with a number of different renderings, but to rehab the building as it is today is cost prohibitive. They have asked for a scenario of what could be done if the building was knocked down; anticipate the Grantham Group will be back in August with a new proposal with the idea of keeping the facade. The gym and recreation department would be kept intact.

There was discussion about whether it would be open to families; currently there are 250 people on the waiting list for Lawson Green. It has been suggested to address Seniors first, but there could be more flexibility if the building is knocked down. It makes sense for Seniors with the Senior center being on the campus. Typically, there is not a mix of families and seniors, it can be harder to manage.

Original proposal was just 12 units in the existing building, but could be more if the building is knocked down. Would be a partnership with tax-credits, CPC funds, etc.

There was discussion about the land available behind the library; Grantham Group thought it would be a good spot for assisted living.

Ms. Chapman opined it would be a cluster of Seniors, she personally did not think that would be good.

Maybe it could be a spot where something for employees could be built, nothing is set in stone.

Mr. Duff said building affordable units is very expensive because of all the State requirements, etc. costs go up with affordable units.

OLD BUSINESS:

No old business.

Mr. Irish and the other members of the trust thanked Ms. Chapman for all her service and hard work over the years and pushing to get things done.

Next meeting is July 19th at 6:30pm.

Ms. Curran made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Howie seconded the motion; a vote was taken and was unanimously in favor.

Adjourned at 7:32 pm.

Submitted by: Shari Moak Young

Approved: July 19, 2023