

AMHERST MUNICIPAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST
PUBLIC MEETING
Thursday, August 9, 2018
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall
7:00 p.m.

Attendees:

Members: Laura Quinn, Nancy Schroeder, Greg Stutsman, Tom Kegelman, John Hornik, Jay Levy, Doug Slaughter

Staff: Nate Malloy, Rita Farrell, Ben Breger

Guests: Paul Bockelman, Laura Baker, Nate Budington, Katherine Campbell, Priscilla White

Recorder: Ben Breger

Meeting called to order: 7:03

1. Announcements

- Nate Budington, CPAC chair, is interested in the Town Housing Policy, as are other members of the CPAC.
- Ben Breger, Trust assistant, is moving on from the position. A search for his successor has been initiated.
- The tenure of Trust members, Greg, Doug, and John will likely be extended 6 months beyond Dec 31.

2. Review minutes from July 26

VOTE: Approve minutes from July 26.

Motion: Laura Quinn

Second: Tom Kegelman

VOTE PASSES 7-0

3. Update on Town Council Candidate Survey and Concerns over Legality

A candidate expressed concern to the Town Manager questioning whether it was appropriate for the Trust, as an appointed town body, to survey candidates for a local election. The Town Manager, Paul Bockelman, took up this issue with the Town's counsel, who provided an opinion recommending that the Trust should not send out the survey. While doing so may technically be legal, the Town Manager believes it is important, as this is the first Town Council election, to steer clear of any

controversy and maintain a clean election. Furthermore, this survey would set a precedent for any other board or committee to survey candidates.

While the Trust has no intention of endorsing or supporting a candidate based on their responses, as the Trust mission is to promote and support the development of affordable housing, it could be implied that the Trust is supporting candidates who support affordable housing.

A possible solution is to have a different entity administer the survey, such as a group of private citizens or a non-profit organization.

VOTE: Send follow up notification to Town Council candidate that the Trust does not intend to pursue the survey and will look to another body to distribute similar survey questions.

Motion: Greg Stutsman

Second: Tom Kegelman

VOTE PASSES: 4-2 (1 abstention)

4. East Street School

The site survey and architectural analysis are both underway. The Trust might look to carry out a brainstorming meeting with Kuhn Riddle in the next few weeks after they have a chance to visit the site and building.

5. MassHousing Grant

Nate will look to arrange a meeting with Karen Sunnarborg in late August.

6. Trust Application for Funding

Rita made a few changes to the main draft of the guidelines since last review. Changes include to make goals consistent with the town's OSRP and Master Plan and to ensure 30-year loan terms. A discussion on the evaluative criteria ensued and a few changes were recommended. Trust members will review the application, send comments to John, Rita and Nate (do NOT "reply all"), and vote to approve the final, revised document at the next meeting.

7. Town Housing Policy

The last review of the Town Housing Policy was many months ago and the changes reflect the last discussion. The policy is in good shape and just needs a justification section. The goal is to be able to present the policy for endorsement to other Town boards and committees, such that there is consistency across Town government in how affordable housing is supported and funded. The policy can also be discussed

and presented at the October housing forum and through an on-line discussion board using ConsiderIT. There was also a recommendation to convene a joint meeting with representatives from various boards and committees to discuss the Town Housing Policy and bring it back to their respective committees.

One specific area of discussion was whether the selection criteria in Section C were too extensive and whether that would be a barrier to obtaining a consensus amongst a variety of Town boards and committee. Consideration will be given to either eliminating or reducing that section.

8. CHAPA's Municipal Engagement Initiative

No application review this evening, the deadline has been pushed back to August 20. John will send out the application draft on August 13 and comments can be submitted to Rita or Nate. Application will then be submitted to CHAPA by the Trust on August 20th by 5:00pm.

9. Items not anticipated within 48 hours

- Fall Housing Forum will be explored for late October. The focus will be on the East Street property and the Town Housing Policy. The Amherst League of Women Voters could be a sponsor, with a similar arrangement to the last forum.
 - Laura Quinn proposed another, larger forum in the Spring 2019 with a more regional focus, where guest speakers are invited in. The idea would be to change the way in which affordable housing development is understood by residents.
 - MHP will be looking to host a smaller, regional event for Housing Trusts in Hampshire County in late September or early October 2018. This could be an opportunity to discuss the event Laura has proposed.
- The situation in Greenfield has brought attention to the urgency to address homelessness and the use of public space for encampments. What would it look like for the homeless to set up an encampment on the Amherst Commons? This will be a topic for discussion next meeting and could be another focus of the Fall Housing Forum.
- The Homelessness Sub Committee has been active. There is a plan for a landlord meeting to expand rental access. There is consideration of employing a Medicaid-funded program to expand access to housing case managers. Members will work with Amherst Housing Authority to discuss creating a Housing First program similar to the model in Springfield.

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 13

Meeting adjourned 9:02pm