

**AMHERST MUNICIPAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST**  
**Thursday, April 11, 2019, 7:00 p.m.**  
**First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall**

**In Attendance**

**Members:** John Hornik, Nancy Schroeder, Sidonio Ferreira, Greg Stutsman, Tom Kegelman, Jay Levy (6)

**Absent:**

**Staff:** Nate Malloy, John Page

**Guests:** Chad Fuller, Rob Crowner

Prepared by John Page

Meeting Called to Order: 7:00PM

1. Announcements

Coalition for Affordable Housing is up and going. Engagement from Trust would help keeping everyone in the loop. Affordable Housing Coalition will begin operating campaigns utilizing Facebook and private website. Tom reminded Trust members about compliance with Open Meeting Law when attending Coalition Meetings.

2. Approve minutes

**March 14<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes approved by consensus.**

3. Discussion of revised draft of Town Housing Policy

- John explains that the Trust, CPAC, Planning Board, Town Council would be asked to review, recommend changes and eventually approve on a revised Town Housing policy to solidify a commitment to a singular plan. It is important that there is buy-in to the policy from all groups. John shares that while most officials support affordable housing, in general, they are unsure about what means specifically for Amherst. It is critical that everyone is on the same page and has shared objectives.
- Trust members raised how would we deal with proposed revisions from the other bodies. John suggested initial

presentation to each body and then representatives from each could take part in writing the final policy.

- This housing policy would help guide decisions such as CPAC funding including priorities and long-term goals.
- Greg raised whether it be advantageous to present an updated Housing Production Plan as well as a Housing Policy at the same time. Is it easier to get approval of the HPP.
- John explained the difference between the HPP and the Housing Policy is that the policy serves the same purpose of the executive summary but adds future initiatives, goals, and priorities.
- Trust members stressed that commitment to a Housing Policy would have to not be empty but followed by action.

#### 4. Discussion of updating the Housing Production Plan

- Nate explained that DHCD only approves the HPP for five years, meaning that our plan from 2013 expired in 2018. It is time to update.
- Trust members raised how can the adoption of a new HPP be paired with tangible action and a commitment to explicit objectives.
- Nate notes that may be able to simply update statistics and some data. However, because we are between census years most of the data is simply projections.
- Trust agreed that the accessibility of language and clarity of executive summaries are a priority. Implementation strategies are an important area of focus.
- Members discussed the possibility of updating the HPP and approve it at the Town level as a single consensus document even if it was not submitted for approval by DHCD, weighing the pros and cons.
- The Trust asked Nate if HPP revisions could it be done internally and whether the project of updating the HPP be assigned to the Trust? Then the Trust could include the role and responsibilities of all key stakeholders.
- Greg raised the many action items and suggestions require planning and zoning changes. it is valuable to identify specific planning/zoning recommendations.

- Nate shared that having an approved HPP has been critical to applying for grants. The state may soon require an HPP for more grant programs.
- Rob clarified these two documents serve separate purposes. We should pursue and updated HPP but should separately author a policy that outlines priorities and action items.
- Greg reminded Trust members that the HPP was not only approved by Select Board and Planning Board but was included as an addendum to the Master Plan *and* the Planning Dept. is seeking to, in the next few years, to do an update of the Master Plan.
- Tom: It is unlikely that content in our housing policy will be invalidated by the Master Plan. Nate agreed that there is nothing limiting amendments or updates to a Town Housing Policy—it can be a living document. Tom suggests including in the draft housing policy is the expectation of an annual assessment and progress report to stakeholders.
- Sid: There has been significant work put into this housing policy. We are anticipating the reaction of stakeholders. Why not simply take to them and see what their response and hesitations are.
- Laura Baker: You will not be punished for going above and beyond. An HPP is often “everything but the kitchen sink” a policy added as a clarification of priorities and objectives even as explicit as ranking priorities.
- Trust concluded on page 2 of Housing Policy to identify the need but need to prioritize based on need, Trust objectives, and what is feasible. Err on the side of specification not generalization.
- The Trust and the Planning Board will have more leverage if we do have a specific housing policy.
- Concerns were raised if ranking priorities would result in favoring one type of project. There is value in providing a combination, a mix, instead of a ranking. Most importantly Trust doesn’t want to deter affordable housing production of any type or any level while maintain priorities.

**Revisions to draft Housing policy were accepted by consensus vote:**

- Strike “unites with permanent affordability restrictions” on pg. 4

- Add on pg. 2 “particularly those earning below 30% of area median income (AMI)” on the second bullet on pg. 4
- Strike the fourth bullet pg. 4
- Strike the fifth bullet pg. 4
- Strike the sixth bullet pg. 4
- Strike the final bullet under Funding Priorities “creating and preserving housing with permanent affordability restrictions.”

**VOTE: To produce a Town Housing Policy, circulate that document for revision from relevant stakeholders, then seek adoption by the CPAC, the Planning Board, and Town Council with the expectation that the Housing Policy is a living document and will be updated on as needed.**

**MOTION: Tom Kegelmann**

**SECOND: Sid Ferreira**

**VOTE PASSES unanimously.**

**VOTE: On pg. 2 under the heading of Defining Affordable Housing and Unit Goals in the Housing Policy add “When deciding whether to grant Town resources, Town Boards and Committees should evaluate how well a developer meets following distribution of affordability:**

- at least 10% less than 30% AMI, 40% at 30-50% AMI, and 40% at 80-110% AMI.
- Average of ....”

**To update the Town Housing Production Plan (HPP) with the understanding that the Trust will contribute to 50% of costs up to \$10,000.**

**MOTION: John Hornik**

**SECOND: Greg Stutsman**

**VOTE PASSES unanimously.**

## 5. Updates and next steps

- John presented his ideas for refining the CPAC proposal including establishing proportional funding beforehand. Chad notes that the Committee needs ownership over this process. John possess

to the Trust whether the Trust should collaborate with CPAC to outline their guidelines including allocating a portion of CPA funds every year to each of the three branches Housing, historic preservation, and recreation and open space.

- Nate suggests that we weave the questions to CPAC into the Housing Policy.
- Update on East Street RFP from Nate: Circulating to Town Staff for review. Small tweaks may be necessary. It is in Town Manager's hands.
- Laura Baker provided an update on the Valley CDC SRO project: This project was the top vote getter in CPAC in straw vote. Initial plans are in the work. Additional meeting with abutters then larger community meeting. Great engagement from Town Councilors: George Ryan meet with Laura. Evan and Pat touring existing SRO projects. Brief meeting with Jim Brassard who have some concerns about safety. Five MOU already signed in preparation. No live-in staff. When we get into the friendly 40B project it is important that we demonstrate support by showing up to meetings.
- 40R Smart Growth Forum update from Nate: Three for four priority areas. Trying to author a bylaw and design guidelines this summer. We need to be supportive throughout the project. Single locations? Proscriptive. Satisfies variety of stakeholders. "powerful tool." Better chance of MassWorks grants.

6. Item not anticipated 48 hours.

7. Next Meetings

- Affordable Housing Advocacy Coalition – Tuesday, March 26<sup>th</sup> at UU Church at 7PM; refreshments served at 6:30PM.
- Next meeting of the Trust - Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup> at 7PM