

AMHERST MUNICIPAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

Thursday, June 13, 2019, 7 p.m.

First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall

In Attendance

Members: John Hornik, Nancy Schroeder, Sidonio Ferreira, Greg Stutsman, Jay Levy (5)

Absent: Tom Kegelmann

Staff: Nate Malloy, Rita Farrell

Guests: Chad Fuller, Rob Crouner, Carol Lewis, Maura Keene, Laura Baker, Marianne Adams, Meg Gage

Prepared by John Hornik

Meeting Called to Order: 7:05PM

1. Announcements - None
2. Approve minutes – Minutes of the May meeting were approved without changes by a vote of 5-0.
3. Status of appointments for new Trust members

There are currently three vacancies on the Trust and two members are retiring, Greg Stutsman and Jay Levy. The Chair spoke briefly about his appreciation of their contributions and thanked them for their service. Jay will continue to participate in the Subcommittee on Homelessness.

Five nominations have been submitted to Town Council by the Town Manager. Until they are reviewed and approved, they will not be made public. There were eight candidates for four of the open positions. The remaining open position is a replacement for Doug Slaughter who represented the Select Board. It is anticipated that Town Council will act by July 1.

4. Status and discussion of CPA funding for 132 Northampton Road

John reported on the new date, location, and structure for the upcoming community forum on the proposal for mixed-income studio apartments on Northampton Road. He circulated the draft one-page description that is publically available. It is expected that John, Jay, Nancy, and Tom will speak at the open meeting on behalf of the proposal.

Greg and Nate both objected to the unprecedented level of review that Town Council is establishing in its review of the CPAC recommendation. Far more detailed information has been requested from Valley Community Development than is typically available or expected at this point in the review process. Most of the questions that have been raised are formally the review responsibility of the Zoning Board of Appeals (e.g., size of the project, staffing arrangements, public safety, parking, traffic). Prior reviews of CPAC recommendations have largely been restricted to issues of need for the project and priorities. The level of review is not necessary for Town Council to make a decision on the CPAC recommendation.

Greg proposed that a letter be sent to Town Council outlining these objections to this precedent. The motion was seconded and approved on a vote of 5-0. John, Nate and Greg will write the letter.

Laura Baker briefly reviewed a number of issues that have been raised by those who are opposed to the Northampton Road studios, as well as Valley Community Development responses to them.

5. HUD Proposed Policy affecting immigrant families eligibility for rental subsidies supported by HUD funding (new item)

Nancy reported on a pending HUD regulation that would require that all members of an immigrant family receiving a mobile voucher be legal immigrants. In the past the size of the voucher would be reduced proportionally if there were members of a family who are not legal immigrants. The proposed new regulation would eliminate the voucher entirely under these circumstances. The Amherst Housing Authority plans to write a letter protesting the new regulation. Trust members may go to the link to comment on it prior to the first week of July.

6. Updates for review and discussion

- a. East Street School RFP – Nate reported that Town staff have virtually completed their reviews and are awaiting a review from the Town attorneys. He anticipates release on or around July 1.

- b. Updating the Housing Production Plan – A decision was made to eliminate a Town budget item that would have provided support for a consultant to undertake this. Updating may be delayed another year or it could occur earlier if there is time available for a Town staff member to do so.
- c. 40R and Smart Growth planning – A community meeting took place on June 4th. After presentations by consultants Karen Sunnaborg and David Eisen, participants were divided into six groups to consider where to locate a 40R district, Downtown, North Amherst, Pomeroy Lane, or another location. Results of these discussions, as well as the presentations will be shared soon on the Town website.
- d. Town Housing Policy—After reviewing the final draft voted upon at the last Trust meeting, Nate found three minor issues that he recommended be addressed, as follows:
 - 1) There are references to both 50 and 60% AMI. It was recommended that 50% be used throughout for consistency.
 - 2) In setting goals for development of new affordable units, 80-110% AMI and above 110% AMI are referenced. The figure 110% should be set at 100% AMI to be consistent with CPA funding caps.
 - 3) At the end of the policy document a population of 60% AMI or below is referenced. This should be reset at 30-50% AMI.A motion was made and seconded to adopted these changes. It passed by a vote of 5-0.
- e. Funding units from Inclusionary Zoning – John reported that Tom has had a brief meeting with Peter Gagliardi about Wayfinders potential interest in assisting developers in identifying eligible applicants for affordable housing units. He will follow up on his return.

f. Amherst Coalition for Affordable Housing – Next meet in July.

7. Addressing the need for housing for 80-100% AMI

Rita reported on local rental voucher programs that were established on the Cape several years ago. These are administered by the Chatham Housing Authority. Vouchers are awarded in an amount no greater than \$350/month with decreasing amounts over a maximum period of three years. Under a contract with landlords, payments are made directly to the landlords by the housing authority. Voucher holders do have their own lease with the landlord and are responsible for the balance of the monthly rental cost. Vouchers are available to persons up to 80% AMI.

John indicated that vouchers could be made available to individuals and families up to 100% AMI under CPA rules. (There are now CPA-funded programs for 80% AMI or less.) By allowing eligibility to extend to 100% AMI, the program would become available to individuals and families at higher income levels, temporarily converting some market rate units to affordable housing. This is something to be considered in the context of the larger CPA budget for community housing. The Trust will revisit this at a later meeting.

8. Items not anticipated within 48 hours – None.

9. Public Comments – Laura Baker announced a public open house at Valley Community Development's affordable housing at the Lumberyard in Northampton, Friday, June 28th, 1-3 p.m.

10. Next Meetings – July 11 for the Trust beginning at 6:30 PM;

11. Town Council: June 24 (6:30 PM), June 25 (Finance Committee, time TBA), and July 1 (6:30 PM)