



AMHERST MUNICIPAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST PUBLIC MEETING

Thursday, April 8, 2021

7:00 PM

Virtual Zoom Meeting. Video recording available at:

IN ATTENDANCE

Members: Allegra Clark, Rob Crowner, Francis Goyes Flor, Sid Ferreira, John Hornik, Carol Lewis, Erica Piedade (7)

Absent: Paul Bockelman, Will Van Heuvelen (2)

Staff: Nate Malloy, Rita Farrell, John Page

Guests: Janna Tetreault of Community Action Pioneer Valley, Laura Baker of Valley Community Development, Rachel Belanger of Way Finders, and Member of the Public Maura Keene, Gerry Joseph, Tom Kegelman, Council Liaison Pat DeAngelis.

Prepared by John Page.

Meeting called to order at 7:00PM.

1. Announcements

John announced that the Interfaith Housing Corporation has offered a financial contribution to the Trust for the East Street/Belchertown Road project. In addition, Laura Baker of Valley Community Development shared that the Interfaith Housing Corp. had also contributed to their capital funds.

VOTE: To accept a gift of \$10K from the Interfaith Housing Corporation to be contributed to the East Street School – Belchertown Road project and empower the Chair to write a thank you note.

MOTION: John

SECOND: Francis

VOTE PASSES unanimously, 7-0-0 (Clark – Y, Crowner – Y, Flor – Y, Ferreira – Y, Hornik – Y, Lewis – Y, Piedade – Y)

2. Review of Past Minutes — February minutes were accepted at last meeting with minor edits. March minutes will be presented at the next meeting.

3. Update on Emergency Rental Assistance Program

Janna from Community Action joined the Trust to share a progress update. John posed the question, looking at the number of applications submitted in the past several months, is there a need to extend this program beyond July 1? To date, \$83,327 has been distributed

in rental assistance funds. Carol expressed on-going concern, asking “are we still waiting for the other shoe to drop?” Trust members agreed there may be an ongoing need for a local voucher program, the level of need is just unknown. Nate suggested that it would be best practice to complete this contract and if the Trust wants to implement a new program, it can rewrite a scope of services and create a new contract. John requested Janna return in May for a final update and a final Trust decision. The consensus among Trust members remained that with no current backlog of application and no one waiting for appointments, and eight currently in process, that it may be wise to complete this emergency program and shape a more long-term local voucher program going forward.

4. Discussion of Draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for Belchertown and East Street School Sites

Rita led a review of the draft RFP and Comparative Criteria, the Trust concluded to recommend the draft RFP for staff review. Ultimately, the final RFP will be revised by the Town Manager and his staff. Trust members asked to see the final RFP before its distribution.

VOTE: To recommend the draft RFP contingent upon staff review.

MOTION: John

SECOND: Carol

VOTE PASSES unanimously, 7-0-0 (Clark – Y, Crowner – Y, Flor – Y, Ferreira – Y, Hornik – Y, Lewis – Y, Piedade – Y)

5. Staff Presentation on Proposed Changes to Inclusionary Zoning

Nate presented the proposed updates to the Town’s inclusionary zoning (IZ) bylaw and the rationale for the changes citing its rare use in recent developments. The goal of the changes was to increase the effectiveness of the IZ bylaw. *A copy of that presentation and proposed bylaw is included as an addendum to these minutes.*

Trust members thoroughly agreed on the need to have new development above 10 new residential units trigger inclusionary zoning and emphasized the need for the integration of affordable units in market rate developments. Leaning on their depth of experience, John, Francis, Rob, and Carol debated the merits of allowing for off-site units (within a specific distance or within the same zoning district as the market rate development) and the payment in lieu of including units as a revenue source for the Trust. Nate and Rita also shared the rationale behind each avenue, ultimately concluding a “strong preference” for on-site units.

John summarized a statement he had written in advance of the meeting and proposed sending it on the Trust’s behalf to the Community Resource Committee (CRC) and Planning Board.

VOTE: To empower the Chair send letter of support to the Planning Board and Community Resource Committee (CRC) of the Town Council.

MOTION: John

SECOND: Carol

VOTE PASSES unanimously, 7-0-0 (*Clark – Y, Crowner – Y, Flor – Y, Ferreira– Y, Hornik – Y, Lewis – Y, Piedade – Y*)

6. Review and Discussion of Draft Comprehensive Housing Policy

John polled Trust members on whether they felt as though they had enough information to continue discussion of the draft comprehensive housing policy. Ultimately, Trust members concluded to empower the Chair to write the Community Resource Committee (CRC) with the Trust's initial feedback and request clarification both on the process and substance of the policy, specifically asking CRC members to join the Trust at their next meeting.

VOTE: To empower the Chair send letter to the Community Resource Committee (CRC) of the Town Council.

MOTION: Carol

SECOND: Francis

VOTE PASSES unanimously, 7-0-0 (*Clark – Y, Crowner – Y, Flor – Y, Ferreira– Y, Hornik – Y, Lewis – Y, Piedade – Y*)

7. Report on State Legislation — Tabled until next meeting.

8. Financing the Housing Trust — *See vote to accept \$10K in funds from Interfaith Housing Corp. above.*

9. Discussion of Homeownership Forum and Planning for Future

John reflected on the first of three forums being co-hosted by the Trust, Coalition, Town, and League of Women Voters of Amherst, complimenting Francis job moderating and the speakers' thoughtful remarks. 50+ community members attended the event. John then outlined the draft agenda for the April 20th Forum on Racial Equity and Housing and invited the Trust members to not only attend but help in facilitating the event.

10. Public Comments — None.

11. Items Not Anticipated Within 48 Hours — None.

12. Upcoming Meetings:

- April 20: Racial Equity and Housing w/Reparations for Amherst & Whitney Demetrius
- May 13: Next Housing Trust Meeting
- May 25: Climate Change, Sustainability and Housing

VOTE: To adjourn

MOTION: John

SECOND: Carol

VOTE PASSES unanimously, 7-0-0 (*Clark – Y, Crowner – Y, Flor – Y, Ferreira– Y, Hornik – Y, Lewis – Y, Piedade – Y*)

Meeting adjourned at 8:58PM.