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**AMHERST MUNICIPAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST  
PUBLIC MEETING**

**Thursday, September 9th, 2021  
7:00 PM**

**Virtual Zoom Meeting. Video recording available at:**  
<https://amherstma.zoom.us/j/82310634580>

**IN ATTENDANCE**

**Trust Members:** Allegra Clark, Robert Crowner, John Hornik, Sidonio Ferreira, Francis Goyes, Carol Lewis, Erica Piedade

**Absent:** William Van Heuvelen

**Staff:** Nate Malloy, Lucya Turowski

**Guests:** Jessica Allan, Laura Baker, Denise Barberet, Elisa Campbell, Elizabeth Haygood, Arthur Keene, Megan McDonough, Kevin Noonan, Maura Keene.

Prepared by Lucya Turowski  
Meeting called to order at 7:06

- 1. ANNOUNCEMENTS:** None.
- 2. REVIEW MINUTES FROM AUGUST MEETINGS:** No comments.
- 3. REPORT BACK ON THE DISCUSSION OF HOUSING NEEDS FOR OLDER ADULTS AT FORUM INITIATED BY AMHERST NEIGHBORS:**

About 60 people attended; questions were raised about how to change University policy to add more residential units on campus.

Nate Malloy reported that the link to the video recording of the presentation is available on the Trust website.

John Hornik reported that there was interest in a development for older adults and that Mary Beth Ogulewicz and Gerry Weiss shared important information characterizing need in the senior community, which can be used in the future when developing and application. This information in addition to slides from his presentation will be shared. He reported that on August 25, [DHCD released a Notice of Funding Availability \(NOFA\)](#) for potential

supportive housing projects that target homeless families and individuals, veterans, unaccompanied homeless youth, **seniors with service needs**, and individuals with substance use disorders. He concluded that DHCD is definitely accepting applications at this time and will likely continue to in the upcoming years.

Carol Lewis expressed disappointment in the conclusion that mixed-age, multi-generational development lacks potential for funding.

Nate Malloy mentioned that developers having separate projects on the same site with use of different funding seems unlikely. He added that there has not yet been discussion of ideas for aging-in-place for people who are comfortable staying where they are. Discussion should be had on how to support aging-in-place.

John Hornik brought up a reminder of no-interest loans available through the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission as a mechanism for support of improving the accessibility of individual homes. He noted that Amherst Neighbors will likely have a separate program on aging-in-place.

Carol Lewis pointed out that there was no legend in John Hornik's graph on changes in age demographics in Amherst and asked if a copy could be shared that included a legend.

John Hornik added that there was inquiry about how to get UMass to add residential units on campus. There seems to be no plan to go beyond the 900 mostly replacement units that they currently have, which would only net around 400 new units.

Nate Malloy added that having students off campus is not necessarily a bad thing for taxes and economic development for the town. If students are sequestered on campus, they don't have to go to businesses downtown. The Housing Market Study recommended off-campus areas zoned for mixed-development to connect UMass and downtown.

Elizabeth Haygood [later in the meeting] emphasized the need to be clear about affordable housing for *older adults* vs. *elderly adults* and highlighted that there are a number of adults who are not elderly, but still need affordable housing. She referenced a case in which a man in his mid-30s who works for the town was unable to find housing that he could afford for 6 months and was almost homeless.

#### **4. STATUS OF HICKORY RIDGE PURCHASE:**

John Hornik inquired about the status on Hickory Ridge. Nate reported that the town is supposed to purchase it this month. The owner applied for a large solar field on the property and is waiting for funding and permitting.

John Hornik brought up the question about whether families could be included as well, perhaps in a separate development. Small piece at the East end of the property that could be used for development of affordable housing by Valley Habitat but noted challenges with the size of the property.

Nate Malloy pointed out that the property will likely have other proposals for usage by the town or community, so the Trust can advocate for housing in general, or a specific kind of housing. There will be a public process this Fall and Spring. Mentioned that U.S. Fish and Wildlife had talked about creating some offices there or regional site for programming. Ideas have been mentioned, but nothing concrete yet.

Erica Piedade mentioned precedent for mixed housing for families and residents over 55 at Greenleaf.

## **5. DISCUSSION OF USE OF ARPA FUNDING:**

John Hornik recapped that Sean Mangano requested that all town department heads to put together information on unmet needs that could be met using ARPA funds.

Nate shared the impact assessment matrix developed in part based on the August Housing Trust meeting. He reported that a number of these were submitted and the town will review and create a master list that they will then seek public comment on. He mentioned that there is room for additional input by the Trust.

John Hornik continued that there were three main ideas [listed below] generated by the August Housing Trust meeting with a potential fourth. He inquired about what members thought about these program ideas and about how much money should be requested for the programs. He suggested that a significant portion of the \$11 million total ARPA funds available to the town should be dedicated to affordable housing. The governor advocated for 20% of ARPA funds to go toward housing, but there is no need to be limited to that.

### **Ideas for ARPA fund use:**

- A. Weatherization and retrofitting heating systems for affordable housing units.**
- B. Purchase of the University Motor Lodge for affordable housing or shelter.**
- C. Mortgage subsidies for first-time homebuyers.**
- D. Small parcel of land for development [Megan McDonough of Pioneer Valley Habitat]**

Part of the Town of Amherst's Gravel Pit on Pine Street, parcel 5B-1 on the Amherst Property Map [Amherst Property Viewer \(amherstma.gov\)](http://amherstma.gov). It is in census tract 8203 [Census Tract 8203, North Amherst, Massachusetts - OpportunityDb](#).

Laura Baker made a strong pitch for the town to make a purchase for a permanent location for Craig's Doors. She emphasized that it had a much higher need priority than other programmatic plans discussed. She added that ARPA funds are a one-time large resource, so it makes sense to pair it with a large capital expenditure rather than something more programmatic. She stated that there is a dire unmet need for Craig's Doors to have a year-round location.

Kevin Noonan mentioned that Craig's Doors is currently housing 30 people at the University Motor Lodge. He said the purchase of the Lodge wouldn't be economically feasible unless ARPA funds were used for its acquisition and then they could work with the ACD to get funding for programming and renovations. He mentioned that if they have to move people out of the Lodge, there is nowhere to move them to—no other places to go in Amherst.

John Hornik asked Kevin Noonan for clarification on the intended use for the Motor Lodge: to use the Lodge as a set of studio apartments for people who are homeless or as a permanent, year round shelter for Craig's Doors?

Kevin Noonan clarified that Craig's Doors is looking for both: a place for transitional/permanent supportive housing and also another congregate shelter site for this Winter. With a preference for the permanent supportive housing because congregate shelter can find church and social hall locations.

Laura Baker reiterated that there does additionally need to be a permanent home for emergency congregate shelter in addition to the longer-term solution of permanent supportive housing.

Sid Ferreira emphasized the need to look at and prioritize racial and ethnic diversity as project proposals for ARPA funds are being discussed. He mentioned difficulties for people of color affording to live in Amherst.

John Hornik mentioned that Amherst is becoming increasingly diverse. He wondered if this is due to the University's recruitment.

Sid Ferreira suggested that is likely the explanation. He additionally mentioned that there is a concern for people of color moving into the town as to whether there will be community for them.

Nate Malloy added that the Census has changed and expanded its categories for race and ethnicity over the past years, which makes comparing data between decades difficult.

Carol Lewis brought up that people in school (college) previously were counted in the Census at the home base and are now counted where their school is.

Nate Malloy responded that he believes it is now up to the individual choice of the student where they take the census.

John Hornik brought up need to think about how to approach banking community and real estate community about opening their doors to people of color looking to purchase in Amherst.

Allegra Clark mentioned that there was talk in the Reparations Committee for using some funds for down payment assistance, potentially something the Trust could advocate for.

Sid Ferreira agreed that there could be a role for the Trust to advocate to the Reparations Committee for down payments, or subsidies for housing with funds.

Nate Malloy proposed that the Trust could send these amended suggestions to Sean Mangano now despite the impact assessment matrix already being submitted.

Megan McDonough, the Executive Director of Valley Habitat expanded on a potential fourth program idea for ARPA funds. She mentioned that for affordable housing development ARPA funds could be used in qualified census tracts or projects that affected disproportionately impacted populations. She pointed to unused DPW land in North Amherst on Pine Street, which is in a qualified census tract, so it would qualify for ARPA funds.

John Hornik suggested going back to the existent list of project proposals for ARPA funds to revise.

**Amended list of recommendations generated from the discussion:**

- A. Weatherization and retrofitting heating systems for affordable housing units.**
- B. Purchase of the University Motor Lodge for affordable housing.**
- C. Purchase of site for a permanent year-round shelter.**
- D. Mortgage subsidies/grants for first-time homebuyers.**
- E. Purchase of property or construction of affordable housing for homeownership opportunities.**
- F. Homeownership funding to maintain/stay in property.**
- G. Racial equity in housing and programs to support diversity of residents.**

Carol Lewis asked about how to achieve recommendation (G). She suggested concern about this recommendation being too vague compared to the others.

Nate Malloy suggested that (G) could be a criteria which should be applied to all of the above recommendations (A-F).

Sid Ferreira agreed with this and said setting racial equity as a guideline has to be in the forefront.

- **VOTE: ON ENDORSING THE ENTIRE AMENDED LIST AND SENDING TO SEAN MANGANO**

Motion: Allegra Clark  
Second: Erica Piedade

- **VOTE PASSES unanimously 7-0** [Allegra Clark- Y, Robert Crowner-Y, John Hornik-Y, Sidonio Ferreira-Y, Francis Goyes-Y, Carol Lewis-Y, Erica Piedade-Y]

## **6. UPDATES:**

### **A. EAST STREET-BELCHERTOWN ROAD RFP**

Nate Malloy reported that the RFP is ready and will be available next Wednesday, a site visit will occur three weeks after. He mentioned it hasn't changed much since the Trust last reviewed it.

John Hornik added that the Town Manager will appoint a review committee which will meet in December.

Nate Malloy added that there is a potential for a Trust member to join the review committee.

### **B. STRONG STREET ASSESSMENTS**

Nate Malloy said there has been more publicity surrounding it. He emailed a few consultants who will get back with numbers and it will have to go out to bid. He anticipated that within the week it can become a public bid.

### **C. LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY**

#### **NEWS from CHAPA: [White House Announces Steps to Increase Affordable Housing Supply](#)**

On September 1, the [White House announced policies](#) to increase the supply of affordable housing with a goal of producing nearly 100,000 affordable homes over the next three years. The policies including expanding LIHTC and working with state and local governments to reduce exclusionary zoning.

#### **Treasury Releases Updated ERA Guidance**

On August 25, the [U.S. Treasury released updated ERA guidance](#) to help accelerate the allocation of rental assistance to applicants. The updated guidance allows for self-attestation alone to document household income eligibility, provides flexibility for bulk payments to landlords and utility providers, and allows recipients to enter into partnership with nonprofits to deliver advance assistance to households at risk of eviction while their applications are still being processed.

#### **DASH Act Filed in Congress to Address Homelessness and Housing Affordability**

On August 18, Senate Finance Committee Chair Ron Wyden (D-OR) introduced the [Decent, Affordable, Safe Housing for All \(DASH\) Act](#) to address the housing supply crisis and eliminate homelessness. The proposal includes investments in the Housing Choice Voucher program, changes to the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), and the creation of tax credits for renters and middle-income housing developers.

**7. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None.

**8. ITEMS NOT ANTICIPATED WITHIN 48 HOURS:** None.

## **9. UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

**A.** CRC Meeting, September 14, 2 PM – Comprehensive Housing Policy

**B.** Housing Coalition, September 21

**C.** Housing Trust, October 14

### **o VOTE: TO ADJOURN**

Motion: Carol Lewis

Second: Erica Second

[Allegra Clark- Y, Robert Crowner-Y, John Hornik-Y, Sidonio Ferreira-Y, Francis Goyes-Y, Carol Lewis-Y, Erica Piedade-Y]

Meeting adjourned: 8:28.