

DRAFT Minutes
Amherst Municipal Affordable Housing Trust
Thursday, July 14, 2022
7:00 PM

<https://amherstma.zoom.us/j/82519078645>

Present: Allegra Clark, Ashleigh Jenson, Carol Lewis, Erica Piedade, Risha Hess, Rob Crowner
Staff: Nathaniel Malloy, Rita Farrell
Guests: John Hornik, Michele McAdaragh (Wayfinders), Laura Baker (Valley CDC)
Notetaker: George Ryan

Meeting called to order at 7:02

1. Announcements

CHAPA Regional Meeting 9/22 coming up

5 Franklin Street affordable housing Northampton open house– August 7 5-7pm

Council and Planning Board to explore changes to zoning re housing production and rental housing regulation system

Interest among Trust members to learn more about zoning and possible zoning proposals

2. Review minutes from June meeting – no comments; minutes adopted as presented

3. Review of Trust finances - Nate

Nate reviewed Housing Trust Balances – Trust is in good financial shape

Trust receives most of its funds from CPA but must follow CPA guidelines/restrictions

Trust earns interest on these funds

Carol asked that Nate provide these figures to the Trust on a quarterly basis

4. Discussion of Open Meeting Law – Erica

Purpose of OML is to ensure transparency in public deliberations

Trust is subject to OML

Review of meaning of “deliberation” and exceptions to OML

Distinguish sharing information from expressing opinions

Best practice is sending emails to co-chairs and/or Nate to be shared with group

5. Planning for September Housing Forum – John Hornik

Date confirmed: Tuesday September 13, 6:30pm – 8/8:30pm

Location: Social Hall at the Unitarian Universalist Society in Amherst

Asked Amherst Media to do recording and provide online meeting access

Topic: Planning to date on East Street/Belchertown Road Development

Presentation to be led by Wayfinders

Outreach to be coordinated with Wayfinders to publicize forum

Outreach to people in the neighborhood and to the Fort River community

Approach School Super Mike Morris for help with community outreach

Nate: can UU host a hybrid meeting if required by state?

John: Amherst Media may be able to help with that; to be determined

6. Discussion Trust priorities and roles – Erica

a. Review Strategic Plan 2018-2022

Review of goals for past two years (2020-2022)

Trust members can become involved by becoming active around one or more of goals (e.g. keeping an eye on legislative action in housing at state level or as liaison with other housing organizations or helping increase Trust's presence on social media)

Sub-committees can be formed to address one or more of stated goals; e.g.

Strategic plan should be reviewed annually with subsequent action plan – opportunity for sub-committee

exploring new and existing revenue sources for affordable housing

exploring alternative housing opportunities such as “tiny houses”

Allegra: reach out to Earl Miller, Director of CRESS, as possible resource

discussion of how to increase Trust's presence on Town website and/or keep Trust's webpage up to date

7. Updates and Discussions on:

a. East Gables (aka 132 Northampton Road) – Laura Baker

good progress on construction; looking at July 2023 as a completion date; marketing will be begin end of this year; lottery likely in Spring 23; send anyone who might be interested to Laura (lb@valleycdc.com)

2nd project in planning in Amherst; 8 acre parcel in N. Amherst 20-40 Ball Lane; has option to purchase and funding in hand with closing in August; first neighborhood meeting coming up in a few weeks (on zoom) and then an on-site meeting

30 first time homebuyer condos; 15 duplexes; hoping to cluster housing, lots of open space, energy efficient; 10 market rate and rest affordable

State has Commonwealth Builder Program to address underserved communities which has made this project possible since N. Amherst is a qualified census tract; will be back to Trust for more updates at future meeting

b. East Street/Belchertown Rd (including moving housing) – Michele McAdaragh

Working with Town on land development agreement (2nd draft in hand); have attorney on board, Town asking them to site project closer to Belchertown Road due to wetlands; Town wants to do it as a local initiative program under 40B; **Nate:** hope is for Town to move one of the houses on the current site to another location as affordable housing

c. Strong Street - Nate

Endangered species on site -- will need to hire a botanist to do a study re natural heritage; waiting to hear back from state before proceeding; still hopes site will allow 10-14 units, perhaps more; working with staff for creative ways to maximize units

d. Hickory Ridge - Nate

Town has submitted a grant for accessible walking trail; many suggestions about how to use remaining space (Fire Station, Senior Center, Affordable/Senior Housing ...); 150 acre site in toto but most of it is solar or wet or has restrictions; will be a public process to determine how remaining space is used which Trust will be involved in; next meeting possible agenda item would be what kind of housing would be suitable – family, senior as well as number of units

8. Public Comments -- none

9. Items not anticipated within 48 hours – none

10. Upcoming meetings and comments for agenda future agendas

a. Ideas about housing at Hickory Ridge

b. Update on Housing Forum, September 13

c. Discussion on possible sub-committees

Next Trust meeting(s): August 11 Sept 8

Meeting Adjourned 8:55pm