

AMHERST MUNICIPAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING
Thursday, May 14, 2015
Lower Meeting Room, Bangs Community Center
7:00 p.m.

Attendance

Connie Kruger, Jeff DeSantis, John Coull, Tom Kegelman, Tracylee Boutilier, Caroline Murray

Guests

Alisa Brewer (Select Board), Nathaniel Malloy (staff liaison)

Announcements

Tom recently attended a national development conference in Washington, D.C. There were many great presentations, including one from a non-profit housing fund in Arlington that, although it is on a much larger scale than Amherst, has similar issues and challenges. They do use a payment in lieu of fee to generate funds, which has been successful to capitalize a reserve.

Tom said that an important message from the conference was that it takes three key components for a successful development: site control, land use permitting and funding. And that there needs to be public participation in all three steps.

Staff provided an update on the recent actions of Town Meeting, including the approval of Article 21 (tax incentives for affordable housing) and the denial of Article 22 (Inclusionary Zoning). It was noted that other articles will begin larger discussions about parking and density in and around the Town Center.

Minutes

Minutes from April 9, 2015 were approved with minor edits. The vote was 4-0-1.

Introductions and Trust Organization

Members of the trust introduced themselves, providing a brief description of their backgrounds and interest in housing. Caroline and Tracylee, who did not attend the previous meeting, discussed their goals for trust.

Caroline explained that she is an advocate for affordable housing and has 25 years of professional experience developing and preserving affordable housing. She helps with organizing tenants, understanding financing and has worked with many stakeholders. Would like to see the trust use its funds on projects that make the most impact.

Tracylee said she is involved with affordable housing through advocacy and because it is strong personal interest. She would like to increase affordable housing in Amherst for all income levels, noting that lower and lowest income households are most at risk of losing housing. She

also said that as a community we need to be more realistic about what workforce housing looks like, the need for aging in place, and the need for homeownership opportunities for families and the need for SRO housing. She thinks that 35-40 units affordable developments can form nice neighborhoods and are a good example of smart growth.

There was a general discussion about Single Room Occupancy (SRO) housing and how it factors into transitional housing. Tom said that professionally he manages SRO housing and has found that some individuals struggle to remain in the units while others move on. The units also become permanent housing for many. It is essential housing for extremely low income. Members also acknowledged that services should accompany SRO housing but that there is limited resources to target this population; the funding does not come with the housing. It is often a patchwork of resources to help individuals in SRO housing. A big reason for this is the lack of federal and state dollars that were once available (even though a few programs remain).

The trust said its role could be to help find partners and management companies that would link housing with services.

Tom was voted in as interim chair with a unanimous vote (6-0).

CPA Funds

Connie and Tom updated the trust on the \$25,000 of CPA funds approved by Town Meeting for due diligence. Due diligence includes capacity building and using consultants to help the trust develop a work plan, setting priorities and action steps. Tom said a consultant provided an estimate of \$6,000 to organize the trust and develop a strategic plan. It was mentioned that Jennifer Goldson is a consultant who does this work and the trust can look at her website (<http://jmgoldson.com/>). After a discussion about hiring a consultant, members decided it was best to first review the resources available (Housing studies, Master Plan, etc.) and outline preliminary goals and objectives of the trust. It was decided that at the July meeting, members would develop a draft scope of work for a consultant.

The resources include:

- Housing Production
- Housing Market Study
- Master Plan (Ch. 4)
- Housing and Sheltering Committee Trust FAQs
- MHP guidebook (Ch. 5 and 6)
- PVPC Regional Housing Plan

After discussing CPA funds it was asked what other sources can be used by a trust. Staff said that most trusts are funded by the CPA and payment in lieu. Trusts can also fundraise and accept donations. It was suggested that the trust co-sponsor events and programs to raise its publicity and profile.

Trust Bylaw

Staff reviewed the bylaw and explained that it gives the trust broad powers and responsibilities. The trust can hire consultants and its own staff. At this time Town staff is not working through the trust. The trust's audit will be complete as part of the Town's annual audit, so there is nothing separate for the trust to do at this time.

Meeting Schedule

The trust will meet the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

- June 11th
- July 9th
- August 13th

Name of Trust

Members discussed the name of the trust and voted unanimously (6-0) to call the trust Amherst Municipal Affordable Housing Trust. The name identifies the trust as a municipal trust and not a private non-profit.