

AMHERST MUNICIPAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING
Wednesday, September 16, 2015
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall
7:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

Attendance

Connie Kruger, Jeff DeSantis, John Coull, Tom Kegelman, Jan Dizard
Absent: Caroline Murray, TracyLee Boutilier

Guests

Staff Nathaniel Malloy (liaison)

Announcements

Jan said that in late December he will be moving to California for 4 months.

Jan also said that he has been talking to Robert Ryan, a professor at UMass and a board member for Interfaith, about having Interfaith provide funds to the Trust.

Tom said he has talked to Caroline and she would like to continue as a member of the Trust.

Minutes

There were no minutes available for review.

It was agreed that minutes will soon be completed by members on a rotating basis between Connie, Jan, Jeff and John.

Housing Forum

Tom is a panelist.

Connie and staff will develop a Trust brochure to be distributed at the forum.

Roles for the Trust

Members discussed the possibility of meeting periodically with developers and service providers to keep mutual interests engaged and to be familiar with the housing landscape. The Amherst Human Service Network (HSN) and the Council of Social Agencies of Hampshire County (COSA) were mentioned as good resources to learn about services in the area.

The Trust could help cultivate support with other agencies and institutions and have a partnership with these many agencies. The Trust could invite representatives from these organizations to meetings and ask how the Trust can help.

It was mentioned that DOMUS has great partnerships with the community and helps them accomplish their housing goals; they are able to convey to the community that they should be providing affordable housing.

Members reviewed the bullet points to finalize a concise written statement the role of the Trust. It was agreed that a consultant could use these points to develop goals and an action plan for the Trust. Members thought it was important to note that the Trust should be actively engaged in public outreach and have a presence in the community. Many members also agreed that at this time that the Trust will not act as a developer, but a facilitator of projects. The goals should reflect this position. The Trust can be a resource to help connect stakeholders. It can also hold property until partners can be found to develop it.

The discussion centered on the need for a broad mission statement that can be focused through strategies and goals.

Members asked whether the Trust would focus on capital A affordable housing, look at very specific income levels (i.e. extremely low income, ELI), or other income levels.

Staff reminded the Trust that it is a public body and subject to procurement regulations and prevailing wage, so that there is an additional cost for the Trust to undertake construction projects compared to private development.

Consultant Scope of Work

Connie disclosed that she has worked with Jennifer Goldson, a leading consultant who has experience with trusts.

Members said that the scope of work should include “a final meeting and revisions to plans”. The goal is to have a consultant and attorney under contract by November.

Kathleen O'Donnell was noted as the premiere attorney who could help the Trust file legal documents.

Jeff made the motion that the Trust should contract with consultant Jennifer Goldson for an amount not to exceed \$7,500 to perform scope of work in proposal dated April 18, 2015 with the addition of making revisions to the plan and attending a final meeting to present these revisions. Seconded by John. Vote was unanimous with one abstention (4-0-1) in support of the motion.

Jeff made the motion to approve the service of attorney Kathleen O'Donnell to attend an informational meeting with the Trust and for preparation and filing of Declaration of Trust. Seconded by Jan. Vote was unanimous (5-0) in support of the motion.

Tour of Potential Sites

Members said they would like to see Town-owned properties as well as private land. Many agreed that the East Street School property should be assessed for housing and that the Trust should be involved if the Town plans to dispose of the property. Members said that some of the CPA funds could be used to complete a preliminary feasibility study of the housing options at the East Street School property.

Members agreed to focus on East Street School and continue a list of possible properties that would be discussed at a later date.

Other properties around Town were mentioned as possible. Members said it would be a good learning opportunity to have local developers discuss certain properties and projects to learn their process.

Tom said he would contact the Town Manager to convey the Trust's interest in the property.

The Trust said it would like to know of other municipal land that could be used for housing. Members asked what happens to properties in tax foreclosure—could the Trust be involved in this process?

Next Meeting

The Trust will invite Valley CDC to speak about their projects.

October 22

November 18

Adjournment

8:30 p.m.