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HOUSING & SHELTERING
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Community Preservation Act Committee
FROM: Housing and Sheltering Committee
RE: FY2017 Affordable Housing CPA Proposals
DATE: January 25, 2016

The Housing and Sheltering Committee prioritized the FY2017 Affordable Housing CPA Proposals at their January 14, 2016 meeting. The committee heard presentations for these projects at earlier meetings and had an opportunity to ask questions to familiarize themselves with the proposals.

Request	Organization	Amount	Priority
Capitalization of Trust	Amherst Municipal Affordable Housing Trust	\$150,000	1
Funds to build a duplex at North Amherst Community Farm	Habitat for Humanity	\$100,000	2
First time homebuyer grant program	Valley CDC	\$227,248	3

The Housing and Sheltering Committee does not recommend funding Amherst Community Connections' (ACC) proposal for a housing stabilization program, questioning whether ACC has the administrative infrastructure and experience to implement it. The committee acknowledged that the proposal is trying to meet a housing need in the community and that they support the proposal in principal, but that there is an existing program to address this need. The Housing Preservation and Stabilization Trust Fund/Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program administered by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development in partnership with the Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation provides funding for a similar program. The following points were raised in the discussion of this proposal: it models a voucher program but does not have assurances to meet standards for health and safety of the living conditions, fair housing, or that the participants will have access to other necessary services. If CPAC recommends the proposal to Town Meeting, the committee encourages the establishment of milestones for program development with release of funds contingent upon meeting benchmarks at each stage.

The committee discussed the other proposals and provide the following in support of their recommendations.

The Amherst Municipal Affordable Housing Trust would be the active agent working on behalf of the Town to facilitate the preservation and creation of affordable housing. The Trust can play an important role in town to increase the supply of housing and needs funds to do its job.

Habitat for Humanity provides affordable homeownership opportunities that are not otherwise available. The organization takes full advantage of volunteers and donations and needs additional funding to help cover the increased costs of housing development.

Valley CDC will use their professional experience to help provide program services and outreach to educate potential homebuyers; a very valuable component of housing that many people need. The committee discussed the length of the affordable restriction and found 30 years to be sufficient.