

## Community Preservation Act Committee- Proposal Request Form for FY 2019

**Project Title:** Consulting Support for AMAHT Affordable Housing Initiatives

**CPA funding category:** Check all that apply

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Community Housing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Open Space
<input type="checkbox"/>	Historic Preservation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation

**Amount of CPA Funds Requested:** \$40,000

Additional funds to be transferred to the Amherst Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (AMAHT) to support a development consultant to plan and oversee housing projects in conjunction with AMAHT members and Town Planning staff.

**Submitting Entity:** Amherst Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (AMAHT)

**Contact Person:** John A. Hornik, Chair

Phone: 413-256-8854 (land)

Email: jhornik123@gmail.com

**Please complete this form in its entirety and include the following in your proposal.**

### **Overview of Proposal:**

Earlier in 2017 the AMAHT adopted its Strategic Plan. The strategic plan outlines priorities for our work in the next few years. At the top of our list is supporting projects that will expand affordable housing in Amherst. While the Trust itself will not be a developer, we will be encouraging and supporting developers who offer to bring appropriate housing to Amherst. In order for the Trust to implement its Strategic Plan and move forward with action items, the Plan recommends an annual allocation of funds for a part time staff position.

This position would help with operations and administrative duties of the Trust as well as work proactively to generate affordable housing projects. The position would also begin to help the Trust with fundraising efforts, coordinate activities with local agencies, and support the Trust's three subcommittees (policy, housing development, homelessness) with research and developing action items.

**Describe how your request meets the CPA criteria:**

#### **a. Documentation of cost estimates, budget**

The funding request is based on using a part-time, non-benefitted experienced, professional housing position that could offer approximately 12-15 hours per week for the Trust. The position would be overseen by the chair of the AMAHT and staff in the Planning Department. There are no other sources of funding at this time, however, this position would research funding opportunities and

revenue sources for the Trust in an effort to begin fundraising and capitalization of the Trust.

**b. Other sources of funding, e.g., grants, self-funding, fund-raising**

No funds have been committed at this time. AMAHT has begun soliciting funds from other sources, with the expectation that the funds could be used to pay for staff as well as professional services such as architects, engineers, and surveyors who would assess feasibility of projects and develop preliminary plans and budgets.

**c. Timeline on how CPA funds would be spent, including over multiple years**

Funds would be spent within 18 months.

**2. Urgency of the Project, if any.**

The lack of affordable housing in Amherst, which has been clearly documented in the Housing Production Plan (HPP) and the Comprehensive Housing Market Study, has caused enormous suffering among the poorest and most vulnerable of our residents. The HPP notes that there is a widening affordability gap in Amherst that has pushed out this demographic, exacerbated by the lack of supply of affordable housing. The 2010 U.S. Census showed a dramatic decline in the number of young families living in town, as well as a drop in school-aged children. A more recent analysis by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission estimated that between 2000 and 2015 the number of families living in Amherst dropped by almost 700 families. An analysis by the State Department of Education, indicated that the number of school-age children residing in Amherst had dropped by more than 1,000.

**3. Estimated timeline from receipt of funds to Project completion.**

The funds would be spent over a 12-18 month period during which the part-time position would be advancing the goals of the Trust and implementing the Trust's strategic plan.

**4. Acquisition or preservation of threatened resources.**

The staff position would help the Town increase affordable housing, either through preservation of existing units or development of new units. The Town's housing plans (Housing Production Plan and Comprehensive Housing Market Study) clearly show that the community can no longer afford to support the status quo, but needs to take action to affect important changes. The threatened resource is the community itself.

**5. Population(s) to be served by the Project.**

As stated above, CPA funds would be used to provide housing for low- and moderate-income households, including extremely low income (ELI) individuals and families. There is a critical need in town for housing for first time homebuyers, for affordable rental units for families, for housing for seniors, and housing first programs for those transitioning from homelessness.

**6. How will the CPA investment in your property, facility or project be maintained over time?**

The Trust will leverage local fundraising and apply for grants and other funding opportunities. CPA funds remain the most common source of funding for municipal housing trusts and would be requested in the future to help the Trust carry out its strategic plan.

**7. Which relevant Town committees and/or commissions are you working with?**

Since only being formed in January 2015, the Trust has been working with the Town's Planning Department and one of the Trust's members serves on the Select Board and one on the Planning Board, acting as liaisons for the Trust. In addition, the Trust has met with the Town Manager and staff to review municipally-owned properties and specifically discussed the former East Street School for affordable housing.

As of August, 2017 when bylaw changes were approved by the Attorney General, the Housing and Sheltering Committee duties were formally incorporated into the Trust and the number of members was expanded to nine, all of whom have now been appointed. The Trust has continued its outreach by meeting with other organizations and agencies to develop cooperative relationships in the community and region. In collaboration with the Amherst League of Women Voters, it presented a Housing Forum entitled "Working the Amherst Housing Puzzle" in October, 2017.

## **8. Other information regarding the Project deemed necessary for CPAC.**

### **Coordination/Collaboration with other Town entities related to Housing:**

As noted above, the membership of the Trust overlaps with the Select Board, the Planning Board, and the Amherst Human Rights Committee. In addition, the Chair keeps the leadership of the following groups and organizations informed about Trust activities and meeting agenda: Craig's Doors, Amherst Community Connections, Amherst Housing Authority, Interfaith Housing Corporation, Valley Community Development Corporation, Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness, Amherst Survival Center, Amherst League of Women Voters, Amherst NAACP, Amherst Business Improvement District, Amherst Chamber of Commerce, local faith organizations, Massachusetts Housing Partnership, the Amherst School Committee and its enrollment projections group, Senator Rosenberg, Representative Goldstein-Rose, other Town officials, and individuals citizens who have expressed an interest in housing issues. In addition, the Chair has met with several of these individuals, and invites them to Trust meetings.

### **History and requirements of the consulting position:**

The definition of this position has been a focus of continuing discussions between the Town and the Trust since funding so support it was awarded. We finally determined that what we needed was a senior consultant with housing development experience, someone who would not require extensive guidance from Town staff. A position description was agreed upon by the Trust (copy attached).

### **Annual Request:**

It is likely that this will be an annual request from the Trust. We anticipate needing support for both a development consultant and capital funds to support development of affordable housing.

## **Attachment A: Staff position description**

### **AMAHT**

#### **Staff Support Position Description**

##### **Job Summary**

This position performs a variety of routine and complex technical and administrative work necessary for the effective, efficient operation of the Trust and to support the Trust as it implements its 2017 Strategic Plan. The most important responsibility is providing leadership in assuring the development of one or more specific, affordable housing projects. The person hired to this position should be able to provide leadership in the promotion and construction of affordable housing in Amherst. Duties are varied and often require considerable knowledge of municipal operations and policies, housing development and financing, construction and land use permitting.

##### **Supervision Received**

The position will receive supervision from the Trust and from Town staff, including the Senior Planner position that serves as liaison to the Trust.

##### **Supervision Exercised**

Provides direction, support and training to the Trust.

##### **Major Duties**

1. Develops and implements affordable housing programs and projects. Assists in the preparation of Requests for Proposals (RFP) for housing projects.
2. Assists the Trust in implementation of the 2017 Strategic Plan. Provides assistance with research, analysis, development and implementation of the plan.
3. Identify opportunities for project development
4. Review of projects and planning for future projects: research, site analyses, development review, permit processing and coordination, land use development analyses, zoning and regulation review and development, and other "due diligence".
5. Implementation and oversight of contracts with architects, designer and engineers as it relates to site development and construction of affordable housing.
6. Researches and applies for grants and funding opportunities in support of the Trust and affordable housing. Identifies partners (local agencies, lenders, etc.)
7. Maintains relationships and manages correspondence with the public, Town boards and committees, local businesses, community organizations and local agencies regarding housing and affordable housing.
8. Performs community outreach and education including community forums and events.
9. Responsible for attending meetings and for taking and transcribing meeting minutes.
10. Prepares and distributes information and press releases about programs and activities. Prepares and delivers presentations.
11. Performs administrative and clerical duties.

### **Desired Minimum Qualifications**

Bachelor's Degree in Housing or Planning or a closely related field and a minimum of three years experience, or any equivalent combination of education and experience.

Knowledge and experience with computers and data processing, including desktop publishing, with modern office practices. The ability to communicate effectively, orally and in writing, with the public. The ability to conduct necessary research and compile comprehensive reports; ability to research and prepare grant applications

Experience in land use and zoning required; experience with public procurement and grant writing and administration required; comprehensive knowledge of housing development and financing required; and knowledge of principles and practices of local government

Ability to organize and carry out a significant work program with minimal supervision; ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with a diverse population including Town boards and staff, supervisors, developers, citizens, applicants and the general public; ability to review and analyze plans and permits for compliance with regulations and policies; and ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing including the presentation skills. Mapping and graphic skills preferred.

### **Special Requirements**

Must possess, or have the ability to obtain prior to employment, a valid State driver's license.

### **Tools and Equipment Used**

Personal computer, including word processing, spreadsheet, and data base; motor vehicle; phone; fax and copy machine, calculator