

Print**Community Preservation Act Committee Proposal Request Form FY2022 - Submission #15987**

Date Submitted: 10/11/2020**Instruction**

Submit proposals by Monday, October 12, 2020 at 4:30pm. CPAC will ask relevant boards, committees and commissions for their input on proposals and encourages applicants to consult with them before submission. Presentations of projects will be scheduled for CPAC meetings in October and November. Recipients of funds shall report back in writing annually about the progress of the project. Projects must be completed within three years of award and unspent funds returned to the CPA Fund.

Criteria

1. Feasibility of the Project; 2. Documentation for Estimated Costs; 3. Funding available: a. multiple sources of funding, b. need for additional funding in future years, c. demonstrates lack of other funding sources if applicable; 4. Urgency of the Project; 5. Estimated timeline from receipt of funding, to start and to completion; 6. Acquisition and/or preservation of threatened resources; 7. Population(s) to be served by the Project; 8. A Plan for how the project will be maintained over time; 9. Priority ranking of your Project set by relevant Town boards, committees or commissions.

Project Title*

Consulting Services to Support AMAHT Program Development

Funding Category*

Check all that apply.

- Community Housing
 Historic Preservation
 Open Space
 Recreation

Amount of Funds Requested*

\$ 20,000

Submitting Entity*

Amherst Municipal Affordable Housing Trust

Contact Person*

John Hornik

E-mail Address*

jhornik123@gmail.com

Project Team

AMAHT members: Paul Bockelman, Robert Crowner, Sidonio Ferreira, Francis Goyes Flor, John Hornik (Chair), Thomas Kegelman, Carol Lewis, Erica Piedade, William Van Heuvelen; and Key Staff: Nathaniel Malloy, Senior Planner, and Rita Farrell, consultant. email addresses: Sid Ferreira <sdf@acad.umass.edu>, Tom Kegelman <tkegelman8144@gmail.com>, Erica Piedade <Erica.piedade@gmail.com>, Carol Lewis <curiouscarol@gmail.com>, Will Van Heuvelen <vanheuvelen.will@gmail.com>, Rob Crowner <robcrowner@gmail.com>, Paul Bockelman <bockelmanp@amherstma.gov>, Francis Goyes Flor <francis.goyes@gmail.com>, rita farrell <ritaannfarrell@gmail.com>, Nathaniel Malloy <malloyn@amherstma.gov>

Names and e-mail addresses for other members of your project team.

If your proposal has an associated website, you may include a link.

<https://www.amherstma.gov/2199/Amherst-Affordable-Housing-Trust-Fund>

Proposal Overview*

In April 2017, the Housing Trust adopted its strategic plan (attached). This plan outlined work priorities for the next few years. At the top of the list is supporting projects that will expand affordable housing in Amherst. While the Trust itself is not a developer, it will continue to encourage and support developers who offer to bring appropriate housing to Amherst.” The strategic plan can be found on the Trust’s webpage: <https://www.amherstma.gov/2199/Amherst-Affordable-Housing-Trust-Fund>

One critical component of the Trust’s work is having an expert consultant both to provide advice to the Trust, to research other programs that are relevant to the Trust’s plans, and to develop proposals and documents necessary to pursue its work. We have operated with a consultant for the past three years, funded by CPA, and the following are among her accomplishments and assignments in collaboration with the Trust acting as a committee of the whole and with individual members and Town staff:

- Writing a draft RFP for development of the East Street School site.
- Writing guidelines for the proposals for developers seeking Trust funds.
- Writing an application for funding from MassHousing Finance for a project to identify sites for affordable housing development and for a 40R district.
- Drafting contracts for organizations requested to do research related to the development of the East Street School site
- Writing an application to CHAPA for support of affordable housing advocacy activities.
- Drafting the Town Policy on Affordable Housing Priorities
- Research on Massachusetts communities with a local housing voucher program, supporting local inclusionary zoning, State and Federal Uniform Relocation Act requirements, State legislative initiatives
- Participation in the Fall Housing Forum
- Research and development of Amherst COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program

The following are activities that are anticipated in the future:

- Revising the RFP for development of the East Street School site, depending upon the results of new analyses of wetlands and hazardous materials in the existing building.
- Leading a subcommittee examining methods to improve access to affordable rentals
- Continuing work on Amherst COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program, as needed. The current round will end in November, at which point the Trust will be considering whether to extend/expand the program.
- The Housing Trust expects to acquire other property in addition to the East Street School site. As it does this, the consultant position

will have a key role in planning such projects.

We are fortunate to have secured the services of Ms. Rita Farrell as our expert consultant. Four to five years ago, she retired from a long-term position with the Massachusetts Housing Partnership, which assists communities in developing affordable housing. While with MHP, she consulted with Amherst on the project that led to the preservation of affordable units at Rolling Green. As described above, she has been invaluable in providing services to the Housing Trust. Many other communities also employ consultants engaged in activities to support development of affordable housing, activities that Town staff may not have either the time or specialized knowledge to engage in.

There is no Town staff member with the time, the flexibility, or the combination of experience and expertise that Ms. Farrell offers. Hiring this consultant every year is not only financial prudent, but also programmatically smart. Ms. Farrell has over 30 years of experience working for the Massachusetts Housing Partnership, assisting local governments in the development of affordable housing. As a consultant, her time is flexible so that she is able to put in different hours each month depending upon the requirements of particular tasks. We only pay her for the work that she does. If we had a part-time employee, that person would work regular hours with limited flexibility, and we might find ourselves creating “make work” at times to justify her employment.

Include specific details of your project, including deliverables, items to be repaired, specific purchases, etc. Once your proposal is approved by Town Council, no changes will be allowed.

Description of Funding Needed*

The Trust is requesting \$20,000 for support of this activity. The expert consultant is hired under a contract with an hourly rate for services performed. These are requested by the chair of the Trust, and invoices are reviewed and approved by John Hornik (Trust Chair) and Nathaniel Malloy (Senior Planner).

Include cost estimates and other sources of funding.

Budget*

Project Budget for AMAHT Consulting Services.docx

Attach your project budget.

Estimated Timeline*

The AMAHT will spend the funds judiciously on projects that have been first reviewed and prioritized in accordance with the Trust bylaw, CPA regulations, housing studies, and its Strategic Plan. It is expected that all funds will be expended within two to three years.

Describe the project timeline from receipt of CPA funds to project completion. Include in the timeline when funds will be spent.

What is the urgency of the project, if any?

The lack of affordable housing in Amherst has been clearly documented in the Housing Production Plan (HPP), the Comprehensive Housing Market Study, and most recently in the draft proposal for a new Town Affordable Housing Policy (copy attached). Many individuals and families who are low income are priced out of Amherst. Available data indicates that 57% percent of current renters in Amherst spend more than 30% of their income on housing and for many it is more than 50%. Since 2010 there has been a dramatic decline in the number of young families living in town, as well as a significant drop in the number of school-aged children.

The HPP recommended that the Town develop 225 housing units for low and extremely low income households in the following five years, including 40 units for homeownership, 50 units for seniors and, 25 units for those with disabilities. Few of those units have been developed. We need to act as quickly as possible to provide the housing that is needed in the Amherst community.

Does this project preserve or acquire any threatened resources?*

The demographic data indicates that Amherst is becoming a community that is largely comprised of students and seniors, losing important social and economic vitality in the decades ahead. The threatened resource is the diversity of the Amherst community itself.

What population(s) will be served by this project?*

The populations to be served are low income individuals and families. Priorities include persons who are homeless and persons who are disabled.

How will the CPA investment in your project be maintained over time?*

The advice and products produced by the consultants will vary in their value over time. For example, the draft RFP for the East Street School Site has now been employed by the Town to identify an appropriate developer. Once a developer is identified, it will serve as a template for requirements to be included in an agreement between the developer and the Town. Then it will have only limited further use to serve as models for future procurements. If we go task by task on other assignments of the consultant, we will find similar results.

What relevant Town committees or commissions are you working with?

Since its formation in 2015, the Housing Trust has been working with the Town Planning Department. Within the past year, the Town Manager has joined the Trust as a full member. The Trust meets when appropriate with the Assistant Town Manager, as well, to discuss Town properties and initiatives of mutual interest.

The Trust had also been working with the Town Council and the Planning Board on the development of a Town Affordable Housing Policy. The Community Resources Committee of Town Council has now taken over that process.

We also work with other local organizations. For example, for the past three years the Trust has co-sponsored a Fall Housing Forum with the League of Women voters in Amherst to inform the larger community about projects and issues related to affordable housing and to seek public input. Last year's forum was quite successful. Almost 60 people attended and there were 20 additional community organizations that participated as co-sponsors. Senator Joanne Comerford and Representative Mindy Domb both spoke, as part of an ongoing effort to track and support State legislative initiatives that fund and promote affordable housing. Because of the pandemic, there will not be an in-person housing forum this fall.

Each month the chair sends out a notice of the likely agenda items one-two weeks prior to the Housing Trust meetings (usually the second Thursday of each month). When the final agenda is prepared for posting, the chair forwards it to the same parties. This includes access to meeting materials. The distributions list includes over 90 individuals, including Town Council, members of other Town boards and committees, 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, Amherst School Committee, Massachusetts Housing Partnership, Citizens Housing and Planning Association, Senator Comerford, Representative Domb, other local service agencies, non-profit agencies, local faith organizations, community members and anyone who has expressed an interest in Trust business.

In addition to supporting the active development of new affordable housing units, the Housing Trust maintains a very active agenda involving advocacy at the local and State level, including relationships of several years standing with the Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) and the Citizens Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA). Trust members were active in either submitting written public comments or oral comments or both before the Amherst Zoning Board of Appeals during its consideration of a comprehensive permit submitted by Valley Community Development over the past four months. A brief, two-page description of the history, powers, goals and past and current projects is attached with the title "What is the AMAHT".

Please include any other information regarding the project you deem necessary for the CPAC.**ATTACHMENTS**

- What is the AMAHT?
- Guidelines for Application for Funding from AMAHT
- Draft Town Affordable Housing Policy

You may upload any attachments you deem useful to CPAC here.

What Is AMAHT- Updated September 2020.docx

Suggested attachments include floor or site plans, photographs, drawings, etc.

You may upload any attachments you deem useful to CPAC here.

Proposed Amherst Housing Policy - Draft 4-16-19 3.docx

You may upload any attachments you deem useful to CPAC here.

Affordable Housing Trust Program Guidelines and Application Form.pdf

Affirmations*

I understand that if my project is approved by the Town Council, my organization will have a maximum of three years from July 1, 2021 to expend its grant. After June 30, 2024, the Town may return any unused money to the CPA fund for new appropriation, unless an extension is granted.

I acknowledge the above.