

AMHERST MUNICIPAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

Thursday, April 19, 2018, 7:00 p.m.

Town Hall Meeting Room

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees:

Members: John Hornik, Greg Stutsman, Jay Levy, Nancy Schroeder, Tom Kegelman, Sid Ferraria (7:10pm) Doug Slaughter (7:17pm)

Staff: Ben Breger, Rita Farrell

Guests: Priscilla White, Laura Baker, Chad Fuller, Jim Linfield

Recorder: Ben Breger

Meeting begins 7:07 pm

1. Review of minutes from March 8 meeting

VOTE: Meeting minutes accepted

Mr. Hornik motions

Ms. Schroeder seconds

VOTE PASSES 5-0

2. East Street School Property - the saga continues

Due to the new charter passing, Article 27 is not able to come before Town Meeting as initially written (and voted upon last meeting). Town Meeting and Select Board are not supposed to take any action that is not essential to town function. Language was added to Article 27 that is problematic, especially the last clause: “until financing commitments have been obtained and key permits have been secured”

This language is problematic because permits and financing can not be secured until the land is conveyed to a developer. On the floor of town meeting, AMAHT will ask for the last 11 words to be withdrawn from Article

- **VOTE: TO SUPPORT WARRANT ARTICLE WITH CHANGES EXCLUDED**

Motion: John Hornik

Second: Jay Levy

Vote passes 6-0

- **VOTE: TO DISMISS ARTICLE FROM TM IF CHANGES ARE NOT EXCLUDED**

Motion: Nancy Schroeder

Second: Dough Slaughter

Vote Passes 6-0

3. Evaluation of Requests to Housing Trust for funds to support affordable housing projects

Rita and John developed “Town of Amherst Affordable Housing Trust Guidelines and Application Form” as a means for developers to request funding from the Trust. This is a mechanism for a developer to ask for Trust money.

Mr. Slaughter: Form should be posted on website and advertised and refreshed regularly. Would it be wise to have a public hearing around a particular project so citizens can voice concerns? Meetings should be advertised differently when there are funding applications reviewed such that the public is notified.

Mr. Kegelman: Rolling applications can create non-competitive process so we should be clear about requirements for projects accepted this way. What is considered a desirable project in terms of cost per unit? We should aim high and make sure we get great results so CPA continues to provide funding.

4. Update on Homelessness

Mr. Levy: In Northampton, there is an effort to reach out to private landlords, and offer support services and funding to enable them to provide housing for the homeless and housing insecure. In Northampton, they bring a legal expert along to talk with landlords about fair housing initiatives and

laws governing homelessness. One idea is to give out an award to landlords to honor those who have been housing the homeless already. We might look to develop a panel of the people who provide money to landlords, from different agencies, to present to an audience of landlords.

Mr. Slaughter: Rental registration website could be used to reach out to get landlords to come to meetings. There are many small players in the Amherst housing market and property management companies may also be considered.

5. Housing Trust website reconstruction - Stage 1

Stage 2 could entail a developer page with the application once that is complete, links to other websites, or more interactive features. Interactive features, such as Consider.it, can be used on a project-by-project basis to consider public feedback.

6. Applications to State to expand access to funds to support affordable housing development – Fishing Licenses

Amherst was one of 12 applicants for the MHP Planning for Housing Production Program. We asked for funding for 4 distinct activities: predevelopment funding, site acquisition specialist, public outreach, 40R consultant.

Note: NEXT MEETING, Thursday, May 10

7. Items not anticipated in advance of the meeting

Town Meeting article up for vote which would increase minimum square footage of units to 1,100 sq ft, which can better accommodate 2-3 bedrooms. The Trust should consider supporting this article.

Adjourn 9:07pm