



**AMHERST MUNICIPAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST
PUBLIC MEETING**

**Thursday, December 9th, 2021
7:00 PM**

Virtual Zoom Meeting: <https://amherstma.zoom.us/j/81593115763>

IN ATTENDANCE

Trust Members: Allegra Clark, Robert Crowner, John Hornik, Sidonio Ferreira, Carol Lewis, Erica Piedade, William Van Heuvelen

Absent: Paul Bockelman

Staff: Nate Malloy, Lucya Turowski

Guests: Rachel Belanger, Representative Mindy Domb, Linda Slakey

Prepared by Lucya Turowski

Meeting called to order at 7:09 pm.

1. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

John Hornik met with Anika Lopes and will be meeting with Jennifer Taub, two new Town Council members. He will additionally follow up with people he has previously been in contact with including Elisha Walker, Michelle Miller and Ana Devlin Gautier.

Pam Rooney sent John Hornik a note stating that she plans to propose a new Town Council task force on addressing the problems associated with the expansion of student housing. He has agreed to participate.

Sid Ferreira announced that December 10th at 6pm there would be a reading of the UN Human Rights Charter in the Commons for Human Rights Day.

2. REVIEW MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER MEETING:

Carol Lewis brought up that she thought that the Trust had agreed that all four ARPA proposals would be condensed into one document for Sean Mangano.

John Hornik agreed and said it did not seem necessary since Sean Mangano proposed the spending plan to Town Council. He mentioned that he was uncertain whether the Town Council approved the plan or when they would need a detailed recommendation for use of

the money that the Trust theoretically has some responsibility for: \$1 million for addressing issues of homelessness and \$1 million for affordable housing.

Carol Lewis wanted to clarify that that means the four Trust proposals for ARPA fund use are still in the background.

John Hornik confirmed and said that Sean Mangano was not looking for more detail at this stage.

No further comments on the minutes. Accepted as submitted.

3. DISCUSSION OF TRUST PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF TOWN COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING POLICY

John Hornik stated that much of what is included in the Town Comprehensive Housing Policy is consistent with what the Trust is doing. He suggested a need to identify things that are priorities and things that the Trust potentially would want to own as the Town implements the plan. He mentioned because much of the policy goes beyond the Trust's statutory responsibility there needs to be caution on deciding what to prioritize.

Carol Lewis inquired if the Trust's statutory responsibility is affordable housing is it "Affordable housing" with a capital A, as in subsidized housing, or is it any housing that is affordable.

John Hornik responded that it is subsidized housing for individuals or households typically 80% AMI or below, potentially 100% AMI as well.

Shared in a document produced by John Hornik:

Goal I: Promote Greater Pathways to Homeownership and Integrated Communities through Increased Supply of a Diversity of Housing Types

Objective: Increase the supply and variety of mixed-income homeownership housing choices in all neighborhoods so that current and future residents at all stages of life can live in Amherst and so that neighborhoods are socioeconomically, racially, and culturally diverse.

Specific Housing Trust Priorities that align with the Comprehensive Housing Policy:

1. Production of diverse housing types and alternatives to single-dwelling homes on large lots.
2. Reduce the occurrence of rental conversion of single-family homes.
3. Working with stakeholders in town to increase production of starter homes and other options that are accessible to populations who typically can't afford buying a home in Amherst.
4. Partnerships with non-profits and local developers to encourage small-scale housing that meets the needs of seniors, singles, and disabled residents, *and also persons who are unhoused.*
5. Creation of homes for purchase that qualify for the Subsidized Housing Inventory [80% AMI], all in order to create more housing that is affordable to those earning 120% AMI or lower.

6. Build racial and social equity into housing planning and funding by ensuring that barriers to housing are reduced.
7. Actively acting to eliminate discrimination in housing.

John Hornik suggested the Trust additionally generate a list of projects that it is currently involved in that are in line with the new policy.

Allegra Clark asked in regard to #2 “Reduce the occurrence of rental conversion of single-family homes” what that would look like for the Trust. Would it mean meeting with realtors and discouraging sale to investors?

John Hornik suggested that the Town could change the tax structure so that if single-family homes are not owner-occupied the tax rate would be higher.

Allegra Clark responded that she believed the Town voted that idea down a few weeks ago.

John Hornik said he did not recall that and believed it was to do with differential rates for commercial versus residential. He added that if the Town were to change the tax structure for single-family homes it would require new statutory authority from the State Legislature. He mentioned that the City of Somerville is currently attempting to do this, as pointed out by Representative Mindy Domb. The Trust could develop a proposal along these lines or leave it to the special task force that Pam Rooney wants to create.

Allegra Clark mentioned that along the same lines at the state level there is talk about luxury real estate tax. She inquired whether that could potentially be a by-law that the Town Council could create and ensure that Amherst adopts it regardless of what the state does.

John Hornik responded that, no, there would need to be legislative action on it and once it was adopted at state level it could become a local option and added that there is growing interest in it from a variety of towns. It would be a luxury tax on home sales, not on the value of homes until they are actually sold. He said added that the Trust could take action on this by joining with other towns and doing advocacy at the state level.

Continuing onto the third item on the list, “Working with stakeholders in town to increase production of starter homes and other options that are accessible to populations who typically can't afford buying a home in Amherst.” He suggested it is already something the Trust is hoping to do. The Trust is hoping to be able to use property on Strong St. to create condominiums for homeownership, which would be an example of something that fits into this goal.

For #4, “Partnerships with non-profits and local developers to encourage small-scale housing that meets the needs of seniors, singles, and disabled residents, *and also persons who are unhoused.*” John suggested that the Trust is currently involved in partnerships, such as the most recent RFP. He suggested the Trust would want to continue these partnerships, which could be through RFP process or something like the Valley CDC-

initiated Amherst Studio Apartment project, where the Trust stood in support, endorsed financial support from CPAC and organized constituent/advocates to work against those trying to oppose or block the project.

For #5, "Creation of homes for purchase that qualify for the Subsidized Housing Inventory [80% AMI], all in order to create more housing that is affordable to those earning 120% AMI or lower." John suggested that this could take the form of supporting Amherst Community Land Trust model for homeownership, or Habitat for Humanity and Valley CDC, which mainly do projects for 80% AMI.

Carol Lewis asked if there was a condominium homeownership opportunity, could it be that some of the units are at 80% and some up to 120% so there is a mix.

John Hornik responded that there could be. An RFP would be similar to the Belchertown Rd RFP, which allowed units up to 100% AMI or in the East St School that might allow some market-rate units because it is not restricted with respect to income. He mentioned that DHCD determines how much subsidy it is able to apply, but that does not preclude making additional units at market rate. So, it is a definite possibility.

For #6, "Build racial and social equity into housing planning and funding by ensuring that barriers to housing are reduced." John Hornik suggested that the Trust does some of this automatically by ensuring that housing is available to people with lower incomes. The RFP for East St/Belchertown Rd required that developers do special outreach to individuals or households of color, so that it's not simply low-income, but focuses on racial equity as well. This could be continued. He mentioned that there is some limitation to this because when the developer builds a pool of eligible people, they select randomly. There can't be a racial or ethnic bias to that selection process, but there could be a lot of outreach to ensure more diversity in applicants.

For #7, "Actively acting to eliminate discrimination in housing." John Hornik mentioned that the predecessor to the Trust was a Fair Housing Committee in town and the Trust has never really adopted that as a goal. There is no longer a fair housing group, so there is the question of whether there should be a fair housing group and whether it should be the responsibility of the Housing Trust. He mentioned that when the Trust did the educational forum on racial equity, one of the participants mentioned problems that she and her husband had purchasing their home. They were unable to get a loan despite full employment and she believed that it was a consequent of discrimination. The only way they were able to purchase the house was that the current owners offered to hold the mortgage, providing evidence that banks and realtors in Amherst don't necessarily do a proper job of ensuring access.

John Hornik added that Rita Farrell mentioned that if these are goals that the Trust intends to do, that it should do them in collaboration with other groups or individuals. He suggested that #7 would be a perfect one to take on in collaboration with the Human Rights Commission, of which Sid Ferreira is a member.

Sid Ferreira agreed and mentioned that the Human Rights Commission has been discussing how there needs to be education to avoid discrimination and learn how to be better and diversify the community. He agreed that it would be a great project for the Trust to work on in collaboration with others including the Human Rights Commission.

John Hornik added that since the new Town Council has yet to be seated, it remains to be seen what they and others think would be necessary for the new town policy, whether it be a taskforce or through some other Town Council initiative. He added that the Trust should carefully consider not only what they think is important, but what they have interest in pursuing.

Linda Slakey, mentioned that #6 and #7 [goals to improve racial and social equity] are important to the ACLT and that they find themselves not equipped to understand what they can legally do to promote it beyond marketing. She suggested it would be a great help if the Town could find ways to go beyond just marketing toward target populations. She added that the ACLT recently received a land donation and the donor had interest in writing into the record of the gift, the desire that the land eventually end up in the hands of people of color. In the meantime, she sold it to the city in tenant. She suggested that the Trust and the Town could open up policies that would encourage or require properties be available to populations that have historically be discriminated against. She mentioned the need for creative work on potential remedies.

John Hornik suggested that this harkens back to the idea of the Trust getting involved in fair housing in collaboration with the Human Rights Commission.

Shared in a document produced by John Hornik:

Goal II: Increase the Supply and Variety of Affordable and Market Rate Rental Housing

Objective: Promote the creation of new rental housing stock in Amherst that is affordable to a variety of income levels and family sizes.

John Hornik suggested working with institutions of higher education, particularly UMass. He explained that students take advantage of existing housing in Amherst because they do not have enough on-campus options, filling up historically starter family homes. He mentioned recent articles published citing cases of students moving as far as Holyoke or Springfield to find housing. It is a problem for the Town of Amherst and undergraduate and graduate students at UMass. He inquired to what extent the Trust would like to get involved in this goal.

Carol Lewis suggested that the Town likely has more pull to achieve these things and the Trust's role would be better fitted as more of a support, rather than to take the lead.

Sid Ferreira agreed that the Town and the University should work together, and the Trust could be supportive when the Town decides.

Linda Slakey mentioned she has had some experience with the University and mentioned that they are moving forward with public-private partnerships to build on Massachusetts Ave, suggesting that they're moving beyond what seemed to be a roadblock for a long time. She added that the more long-term view for the University and one of its biggest concerns is that it's difficult to predict the growth in resident population. She suggested that in a long-term view it is more likely to shrink, which affects the University's willingness to tie up capital and buildings.

John Hornik added that the current capacity is to be able to house about 14,000 students on-campus and the number of students that are enrolled is 28,000 excluding distance-learners. He doubts that the gap between 14,000 and 28,000 will shrink very rapidly and suggested that students would likely live on campus if they had the opportunity to do so. He posited that it is likely more difficult to secure on-campus housing after 2nd or 3rd year.

Sid Ferreira responded that, it is more difficult to secure on-campus housing if the student chooses to move off campus and then move back. If the student chooses to stay on-campus for the duration the probability of them securing on-campus housing is pretty good.

John Hornik brought up that the University public-private partnership housing project was supposed to happen about two years ago when North Village housing was eliminated, so they aren't moving expeditiously to add net new 300-400 units on campus. He added that it is his impression that the University has lost its ability to subsidize on-campus housing and consequently that is the major reason for hesitance to build more on-campus housing because it is just too expensive even under a public-private partnership.

Nate Malloy agreed with Sid that the Town-Gown relationship could be strengthened, so whether or not the Trust is a part of that or just recommends it. He suggested when UTAC was meeting there was good discussion and mentioned that keeping open lines of communication is important.

John Hornik added that UTAC dissolved when Amherst changed the charter and the new Town Council never picked it up, and he's uncertain about whether the University pressed for its reestablishment either. He suggested that it is in Town Council's court now.

Nate Malloy added that in a UTAC report for the Gateway Project, they identified areas where it might make sense to have higher density or off-campus student housing that could be privately developed. He mentioned it's a long road, but a conversation worth having because it is a town problem when so many of the single-family homes and other private properties are rented to students and it's forcing out non-students.

Carol Lewis suggested it might be helpful for the Trust to express support to Town Council to establish a Town-Gown relationship, line of communication as perhaps an impetus to get it going.

John Hornik followed by saying the Trust could endorse the reestablishment of Town-Gown and express willingness to participate if asked.

Shared in a document produced by John Hornik:

Goal III: Create, Update, and Maintain Safe, Secure, and Environmentally Healthy Housing

Objective: Promote policies that ensure housing does not harm the health and safety of residents, improve the living conditions in rental and non-rental housing, offer protections to renters, and promote environmental health.

1. Creating, continuing, funding, enforcing, and enhancing programs and regulations that help ensure rental and non-rental housing is safe and habitable and protect tenants' rights.
2. Improve outreach in order assist residents in learning about programs that are available to help address safety, security, and environmental health issues in their homes and increase its oversight capabilities.

John suggested that this area is less related to the Trust's regulatory responsibilities but is nonetheless important. He added that one of the Trust's ARPA proposals is related to this: funding changes to the sustainability of existing multi-unit buildings. He added that this has not been a major issue for the Trust until it co-sponsored a forum on housing and sustainability with the Energy and Climate Action Committee. He suggested this goal is something the Trust may not want to take the lead in but might want to collaborate with the Town Sustainability Coordinator and the Chair of ECAC.

Allegra Clark responded that she thinks it's important, but the Trust could take a supportive role in partnering with ECAC.

Shared in a document produced by John Hornik:

Goal IV: Address Climate Sustainability and Resiliency of Housing Stock, Location, and Construction

Objective: Ensure that new and rehabilitated housing is constructed in ways that address climate action and that are sustainable and resilient.

John Hornik mentioned that the Trust has already been involved in this. He pointed to the RFP for East St/Belchertown Rd as an example, in which it was expected that developers would assure that construction would address climate action and sustainability. He assumed that the Trust would continue with similar action.

Carol Lewis added that it seems that the Trust does it in conjunction with housing development or renovation or whatever they're doing, but not as a separate project.

John Hornik agreed and mentioned that the ECAC wants to undertake this goal for all existing housing and commercial property in town. He suggested that the Trust wouldn't necessarily want to take the lead in this but could have a supporting role. The conclusion is

to continue what the Trust has been doing, but not to take on any more than that at this time.

Shared in a document produced by John Hornik:

Goal V: Align and Leverage Municipal Funding and Other Resources to Support Affordable Housing

Objective: Utilize and leverage Town resources to support Affordable Housing and create a significant number of new, deeply Subsidized homeownership and rental opportunities while also significantly adding to the moderately priced market rate housing stock.

1. Community Preservation Act funds, Community Development Block Grant funds, or other revenue sources, should be used to assist and support projects that will increase the availability of Restricted Affordable Housing throughout Amherst.
2. Utilizing and leveraging Town-owned land by providing it at low- or no- cost can result in a non-financially feasible project becoming feasible and is an important part of this Goal and the prior four Goals.

John Hornik summarized that this goal is about maximizing available financial resources, though it doesn't propose new resources. It gives the Trust support for calling on CPA funds, CDBG funds and other revenue sources that could include future fees associated with short-term rental properties, resources like town property that becomes available, tax-incentive financing, etc.

Carol Lewis inquired if this goal was the goal that suggested that "Town Council will proactively engage the Housing Trust in moving forward on developing identified properties and working to establish and receive new revenue and funding programs to support?" suggesting that the Town Council will be supporting the Trust.

John Hornik agreed and said the Trust just has to find the opportunities and push the Town Council to support them. He suggested the goal is consistent with what the Trust wants to do and has been doing.

Allegra Clark inquired about the role of keeping existing affordable housing affordable. She mentioned that it seems one major problem is that units that were once affordable are being renovated and rents are raised, which displaces people.

John Hornik suggested that it is in the Town Comprehensive Housing Policy, but it mostly refers to housing owned or managed by the Amherst Housing Authority. For example, if they have a building or units that are threatened because they're out of date, then they should be prioritized. He continued that what is missing are policies toward housing that is not officially identified as affordable but that is currently affordable, where the owner can decide to increase the rent and displace current tenants. He suggested it is a good question and is unsure of how the Trust can address circumstance like those.

Nate Malloy followed up by saying there is Affordable housing [with a capital A] which has deed restrictions which is included in the subsidized housing inventory. The Trust and Town have some authority to keep them affordable. The other type of affordable housing that John was mentioning is housing without any deed restrictions or mechanisms for rent increases so there is little authority to control affordability. He suggested that deed restricted affordable housing has been maintained well, including over \$1 million invested in Rolling Green, there has been a first-time homebuyer program in partnership with Valley CDC to keep affordability for homeowners, but in general the Town has little authority over market-rate units. He continued, that if there is an owner that decides to increase rent beyond the voucher program, the Town might find out about it after the fact, but don't have much leverage without funding to buydown the units overtime. He suggested it is difficult to monitor these [lower case a] affordable units.

John Hornik followed by stating vouchers are in general a problem in Amherst and that the Amherst Housing Authority which manages the voucher program has a difficult time assisting people to lease in Amherst because rents are so high and exceed what is allowable for the voucher program.

Carol Lewis mentioned that she thought one of the possible municipal regulatory strategies listed was to look in the possibility of something like rent caps.

John Hornik added that he believes the Town would need legislative authority to do that.

Carol Lewis agreed and suggested that the first step could be to push for legislative authority, just like with the transfer fee.

John Hornik suggested that there are 20-30 towns lobbying for legislative action on the transfer fee for high-end real estate transactions.

Representative Mindy Domb joined in and thanked the Trust for all the work they do and said the meetings are always incredibly substantive and heartfelt. She added that there are a lot of bills in the State House regarding transfer fees on housing, some of them home rules specific to particular towns and some are statewide that would allow for local option. Representative Dylan Fernandes who represents communities like Martha's Vineyard has a transfer fee home rule for Martha's Vineyard that would create a transfer fee for houses over several million dollars, which would go into a fund to support the development of affordable housing on the island. This is an example of a home rule. There are other bills aiming to do this on a statewide level or give localities local option to do this. She brought up another home rule example, Somerville, a leader in innovative revenue generation to support affordable housing. She suggested that they have a similar issue as Amherst with a large population of students seeking housing. She suggested that the home rule proposed by Somerville has a lot to do with Amherst's dilemma and has to do with non-homeowner-occupied housing where out-of-town LLCs buy up housing stock and rent them to students taking them off the market for lower to middle-income families. They are proposing a transfer fee on homes specifically being sold to or from non-homeowner occupied LLCs, which would create a new source of revenue for affordable housing. She added that this has

not yet been successful in getting it through the legislature but suggested that more towns need to come together across the state to build momentum in support of transfer fees as a funding opportunity for affordable housing. She mentioned she is in contact with reps from Somerville to learn more about what statewide coalitions there are and is attempting to learn more about those efforts so she can bring them back to Amherst.

John Hornik mentioned that he is in touch with the head of Somerville's Office of Housing Stability who keeps coming up with these kinds of ideas that Amherst might want to copy.

Rep. Mindy Domb added that if the Trust has any questions or concerns that they would like her to do research on, she is happy to do so. She may be able to connect Amherst to other places. She additionally offered to send out a write-up to update the Trust on what is in the State ARPA Bill regarding housing.

John Hornik agreed that would be helpful and moved onto Town Council's goal of establishing a minimum of 250 new units for households earning less than 80% AMI. He suggested that it is consistent with the Affordable Housing Plan that the Trust proposed to Town Council three years ago. He added it was great that it has now been adopted as town policy and suggested the Trust should be reinforcing this.

Allegra Clark inquired whether it would be possible for the Trust members to receive a copy of the report off of which John was reading.

John Hornik agreed that he would do that and suggested that if any of the members had further questions or comments to let him know. He additionally mentioned that he would like to draft a memo to Town Council.

4. UPDATES AND DISCUSSION:

A. TOWN SURVEY FOR OLDER ADULTS IN AMHERST

Lucya Turowski reported that John Hornik and she met with Becky Basch of PVPC who has been responsible for conducting the survey in various other towns in the area as well as Helen MacMellon, Maureen Pollack and Briana Sunryd from the Town. It sounds like PVPC has several thousand dollars in funding for the survey but lacks funding to conduct a mail survey so that would be the responsibility of the Trust. PVPC is currently working to establish a working group, which would include the new Senior Center Director, to meet monthly and provide proposals for the Town to make it more dementia and age friendly. This working group will also finalize the survey before it is distributed, so there is room for change, but John felt like the survey as it exists sufficiently addresses the needs of the Trust and doesn't require any changes. John proposed that in order to collect a random sample, 500 surveys could be initially distributed via mail, with a follow-up round sent out to those who did not respond a few weeks later. He anticipates a 35-40% return rate. Online surveys would be distributed by Survey Monkey and Briana Sunryd confirmed there is a way to set up duplicates so that we know where the surveys are coming from as a way to separate the random sample from, for example, people who take the survey through the

Senior Center. Becky Basch expressed hesitation on PVPC's ability to do data analysis if it is disaggregated in this way, so this would require some volunteers working with John to conduct that analysis. Briana Sunryd offered to help draft an engagement plan and community mapping, which it appears John has already started. One additional concern raised by Helen MacMellon was that outreach for the convenient sample through groups like Meals on Wheels would require a social worker, and there is no capacity for that until late Spring. Other than this concern, the timeline is hopefully that the working group will first meet at the beginning of January and have their second meeting by early February by which point they can agree on the finalized version of the survey, so it will be ready for disbursement as of early February.

John Hornik added that he believed he distributed a copy of the Hadley survey to the Trust previously.

Nate Malloy concurred.

John Hornik explained that about 20% of the survey is devoted to housing as well as ancillary items that would be relevant to the Trust. He said he could redistribute it and if anyone has any questions, they can be directed to himself or Lucya.

Nate Malloy added that the taskforce is not specifically looking at housing, but since they are doing the outreach already, the Trust can augment the survey to get some information about housing, for example aging-in-place or other services for seniors that are relevant to housing. He added that with the new Health Director there is likely some push to do new community assessments in the next year or so and that this is something the Trust could work with tying housing to it and offering support, which will give the Trust more information. He additionally mentioned that the Planning Department has some money to do a Housing Production Plan update, however the Census data might not be ready until next Fall, so it may be delayed.

John Hornik suggested that the UMass Donahue Institute is the regional location for US Census Data, so the Town might want to check in with them.

Nate Malloy responded that some surface-level data has been released, but the more detailed data is still unavailable.

John Hornik added that they did have detailed information on race and ethnicity, but everything else seems to be delayed. He mentioned he has some contacts at the UMass Donahue Institute that he could reach out to.

B. COMMITTEE ON FUTURE OF SEASONAL SHELTER

Allegra Clark reported that the committee has been meeting less frequently recently now that the seasonal shelter has been established at Immanuel Lutheran Church. The hope is that some ARPA funds will be used to potentially purchase a property for shelter and day space for case management services. The Town and members of Craig's Doors have seen

one potential property so far. The Town may additionally have a few potential properties that are not currently on the market. There is consensus that a more permanent year-round shelter location would be desirable. As it stands now Craig's Doors is operating out of Immanuel Lutheran Church for shelter, then bussing people to the Amherst Survival Center for showers, then bussing to the VFW to a warming site. There are three different locations that people are bouncing around to and it would be preferable if all of those services were available under the same roof. Part of the conversation has been about permanent supportive housing, perhaps using CPA funds. There is a potential site in Northampton being considered for 16 medically compromised individuals living in chronic homelessness. She mentioned that though a majority of the homeless population in Amherst view Amherst as their home, there are some people coming from other towns/cities in the area to get services, so it is a regional issue. She added that the University Motor Lodge is still in use, but they are not turning over, they are currently used as permanent supportive housing. There have additionally been four evictions that have occurred recently, one of which was a previous rapid rehousing client that was displaced due to renovation and increased cost, meaning there is an increased need for support in the town.

John Hornik asked if there was any further discussion about the potential competition for resources between having a permanent shelter location and developing a permanent supportive housing program.

Allegra Clark responded that there was not much conversation about this and posited that this was because there seems to be other sources of funding for permanent supportive housing.

C. STRONG STREET PROPERTY EVALUATION

Nate Malloy reported that the consultants are hoping to get out to the site in the next couple of weeks to delineate the wetlands on the entire property and to conduct soil testing in what is considered upland. They will then do a concept development for up to three development scenarios on the property as well as how to bring utilities to the property. They do not have to survey the property, which saves costs. Their services will cost \$5000 and will help the Town figure out what is feasible for the property. Based on their scenarios they may have to go back out with an excavator and determine soil type and whether or not utilities will be feasible. He suggested in the next few weeks there will be something available to look at.

John Hornik asked if it would be possible to schedule a report from the consultants at the January meeting.

Nate Malloy said he would email them to ask if that would be possible.

D. REVIEW OF PROPOSALS FOR EAST ST/BELCHERTOWN RD

John Hornik reported that the review committee, which includes Dave Ziomek, Amy Rusiecki, Rob Morra, Sid Ferreira, Holly Drake and Simone Cristofori and John Hornik, met early the same day for a kickoff meeting. John mentioned that he originally thought the Trust could form a subcommittee to support the review of proposals but found out that for reasons of confidentiality that is not possible. He reported that two proposals were submitted to the town, one from Wayfinders and another from Home City Development. He added that the two firms will be asked to give presentations and take questions in early January with the goal to wrap up the committee's report to the Town Manager so he can make a final choice by mid-January.

E. ARPA FUNDING

John Hornik inquired whether Nate knew if Town Council had approved the proposed spending plan and if so, when Sean Mangano would need more specific recommendations for ARPA money for housing and homelessness should be spent.

Nate Malloy responded that the Town Council did approve the general ARPA plan. He stated that the goal was to have programmatic guidelines by March or April 1st. He mentioned that Dave Ziomek is in charge of the housing money, so he or Sean Mangano would likely be reaching out in the next few weeks. They would want a summary, goals and objectives, measurable outcomes, reason why it's needed and how it would be implemented. He suggested the work that the Trust has done puts it in a good position for that and next steps could be reaching out to Dave Ziomek to inquire about how to get started.

F. CPA ACTION ON COMMUNITY HOUSING PROPOSALS

John Hornik reported that CPAC was meeting tonight to finalize recommendations to Town Council. He recently had an interaction with the Chair of CPAC and suggested that what he believes will happen is that CPAC will not approve either of the large amounts requested by the Trust and the Town for major supportive housing projects. He followed up by saying it's not that they will disapprove it either, but rather bank an amount of money so that if the Trust comes up with something specific that requires that funding between now and the time that Town Council makes their recommendation in April or May, then it could be reallocated to that specific project.

Nate Malloy added that CPAC had a lot of proposals this year and are likely to in the coming years, so it's becoming more competitive.

John Hornik mentioned that when he attended CPAC meetings, there was a lot of support among membership for using money toward community housing, so there is a likelihood that they will put some money aside for housing. He added that he thinks they are reluctant to just put money in the Trust bank or allocate it to the Town without a specific project and

if it is an amount as large as \$500,000, they will probably want to bond it, to spread it out over a number of years.

Carol Lewis suggested that it may also be that if they can't approve both the Trust and the Town's requests and they choose, but the project doesn't fly, then they won't have money for the other. If they hold onto it, they can go with whatever one comes up with a project first.

John Hornik suggested they might also give the Trust a sort of consolation prize of another \$100,000 to hold in the bank to use toward projects that the Trust is considering, such as money toward the evaluation of the Strong St site. He suggested either way, if the Town or the Trust gets funding it would be a win for affordable housing.

Nate Malloy agreed that CPAC is reluctant to capitalize the Trust with funding, although it is allowable, because the Trust is named in the statute as the one place that can just bank CPA dollars, but they are likely uncomfortable doing that. He added that for every other category, funding request is always for a specific project, so the committee is used to allocating money when there is a specific project.

John Hornik suggested that may be the way the Trust will need to approach CPA funding requests in the future, which is that without a specific project there is little point to requesting large allocations.

G. HICKORY RIDGE PROCESS

Nate Malloy mentioned that there is the solar company and a conservation restriction on some of the property so there are a lot of moving pieces, but the goal is to close by mid-January. He also noted that he thinks that the owners of the solar have not yet heard back from the state on their rebates yet, which is partially a reason for the delay. The financing of the solar has not been fully worked out.

H. LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

Will Van Heuvelen reported that the State ARPA funds before the Governor right now, with \$600,000 proposed for housing. He suggested that the Trust send a letter of support to the Governor and encourage members of the Town Council and others to do the same. He added that the Coalition on Homelessness has a cover letter that could be used as a template.

John Hornik added that he would be surprised if the Governor didn't approve it because he initially proposed \$1 billion toward housing and homelessness.

- **VOTE: To send a letter to the Governor in support of the Legislature's ARPA funding plan for housing and homelessness**
Motion: Will Van Heuvelen

Second: Allegra Clark

Passed unanimously: 7-0, 1 member absent. [Allegra Clark- Y, Robert Crowner-Y, Sidonio Ferreira-Y, John Hornik-Y, Carol Lewis-Y, Erica Piedade-Y, Will Van Heuvelen- Y]

John Hornik asked if Will could do everything necessary to complete the letter and the Trust would sign and send it.

Will Van Heuvelen agreed.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

6. ITEMS NOT ANTICIPATED WITHIN 48 HOURS: None.

7. UPCOMING MEETINGS:

a. Housing Trust: January 13th, 7pm.

Meeting adjourned: 9:00 pm.