

AMHERST MUNICIPAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST
Thursday, March 8, 2018, 7:00 p.m.
Lower Meeting Room, Bangs Community Center

MEETING MINUTES

Recorder: Ben Breger

Attendees:

Members: Sid Ferreira, John Hornik,, Tom Kegelman, Jay Levy, Laura Quinn, Nancy Schroeder, Doug Slaughter, Greg Stutsman

Staff: Rita Farrell, Ben Breger

Guests: Maurianne Adams, Laura Baker, Ethan Bakuli, Chad Fuller, Kristin Henry, Gerald Weiss, Priscilla White

Meeting called to order 7:02 pm

Announcements

Mr. Hornik announces the resignation of Emilie Hamilton and discusses her reasoning. Passed around the letter that Hamilton send to Hornik. Trust now has a vacancy.

Ben Breger introduced as new graduate assistant and his duties were described.

Discussion of Inclusionary Zoning articles for Annual Spring Town Meeting

Mr. Weiss gives an overview of inclusionary zoning and the development of a policy in Amherst in 2008. Inclusionary Zoning is a law in many communities which demands developers include AH in new developments. In this proposal, which would amend the existing inclusionary zoning bylaw, a developer could give money to the trust or develop off site (but 50% of units must be on site). Developers could also use tax incentives to develop affordable units.

Review of Planning Board article presented by Greg Stutsman

Mr. Stutsman offered the Planning Board perspective. Planning Board accepts Mr. Weiss's bylaw change but offers developers options for satisfying the

requirements. The PB is offering a different article though they are in agreement in terms. Since there are 2 articles which are in agreement, this may be confusing or be viewed as competing this it may be better to have just a single article.

VOTE: Recommend PB article to Town Meeting

Mr. Slaughter motions

Ms. Quinn seconds

VOTE PASSES 8-0

**VOTE: Recommend Weiss article to Town Meeting in the event that
PB article does not pass.**

Mr. Slaughter motions

Ms. Quinn seconds

VOTE PASSES 8-0

Update on Warrant Article to gain control of the East Street School Property

Ms. Farrel: Update on East St school. The property is vacant, town owned, and controlled by School Committee. Identified by AMAHT as property for AH development. Discussions have been undertaken with Ziomek, Malloy, and Bockelman, to determine if East St site is appropriate for AH development. Developed an article to transfer property to AMAHT.

This process does come with issues. Potentially wetlands there, building is 5000 sq ft and needs a lot of work. Not ADA accessible and converting into housing units could be very expensive proposition.

Approach recommended was to undertake due diligence on property and examine the feasibility to convert to housing before trust takes control. First do a wetland delineation. We are actively an environmental firm to do preliminary examination.

School Committee needs to release the property to the Select Board. Hornik and Farrel outlined article to transfer article to Trust at such point that it is determined it is feasible for development.

Mr. Slaughter: One of the critical points is to make contingency factor clear. What happens if the site is not appropriate for AH development.

Ms. Farrell: Property would not be conveyed until there was a clear path forward.

Ms. Quinn: Must School Committee vote on transfer?

Mr. Hornik: Yes, that it is our belief. Given that Amherst has lost thousands of families, Hornik reached to school committee. Met with a committee member and did mention that AMAHT desire to inherit the East St property. AMAHT should also meet with historical commission.

Ms. Baker: We should not promise family housing before doing the assessment. Is it appropriate for family housing? Senior housing? SRO? Don't overpromise number of school children living there or the type of housing that will be there.

**VOTE: Recommend Warrant Article in principle to Select Board
Motion to send article to TM**

Mr. Slaughter motions

Ms. Quinn seconds

VOTE PASSES 8-0

Attendance at Precinct Meetings to explain article – What can you do?

Need volunteers to present and answer questions at precinct meetings. These are meetings where all the articles going in front of TM are being discussed.

- o **Monday, April 23 at 7:00 pm** in the UMass Police Station
- o **Tuesday, April 24 at 7:00 pm** in the Crocker Farm School Library
- o **Thursday, April 26 at 7:00 pm** in the Professional Development Center in the Middle School
- o **Saturday, April 28 at 2:00 pm** in the Amherst Police Station Community Room

Next Meetings – Switch Date to Thursday, April 19th; May 10th okay

Mr. Hornik proposes to switch meeting and there are no major conflicts.

Review and approve Draft of Town Housing Policy

Mr. Hornik: The way it had been written, it read more like a Trust policy and not Town policy. Goal is to develop 250 AH units. Well on our way with Beacon, Rt 9, and University Dr complexes.

Ms. Adams: Time to coordinate with the town group who is working on affordable home ownership, not just affordable renters. Urges AMAHT to get language that encourages private and public development.

Mr. Levy: Would move to include people who are homeless and unsheltered, on the first page sub goals. “The housing above must also accommodate the following sub goals.....”

Mr. Hornik: Let’s put in a justification at the end of the document to put the document in context and add data to the argument.

Discussion—How to Gain Town support for Trust initiatives

Mr. Hornik: We want to make an interactive website, maybe modeled after the Planning Board site which is interactive and can engage people online. How do people think we can use the website to make people aware of and supportive of our initiatives?

Ms. Quinn: One of the things that is particularly compelling in bringing people together is storytelling. Website is an opportunity to collect stories and examples and share them. Some have good endings but some don’t. We need faces and stories about them. A website might be a way to gather them but we need the format to make that happen. We don’t know people who couldn’t move here because it’s too expensive but we do know people who have found AH or are homeless. We should profile people who are willing to talk.

Mr. Levy: Part of the story is the places and how the community came together.

Mr. Stutsman: Instead of getting everyone in a room, maybe a look at consider.it – a community website for engagement, data collection. Gives one voice per person

regardless of how many times people log on. Not a big question that AMAHT needs to ask the public at this point.

Mr. Levy: It's good for people to know the different funding sources, grant money. Create an infographic that tells a story. Timing of meeting is important. Roll out of homeless prevention program or East St.

UPDATES – What are these other Town Committees thinking?

Status of CPA Requests:

Fully fund Trust consulting contract, ACC rental voucher program for homeless individuals, and ACLT program for two homebuyer purchases, PLUS \$150K to Trust

Mr. Hornik: Appears we got money for consulting and \$150,000 for AMAHT. This sets a precedent for CPAC funding. Can only fund projects: East St housing and Valley CDC studio apartment.

Ms. Baker: Continuing to search for sites, sent out postcards to property owner on main streets and different zones around town.

Homelessness Prevention Program

Mr. Hornik: Family Outreach of Amherst given grant to study homelessness prevention program that was first initiated by Trust. Amount they allocated was \$35,000. Met with Laura at FAO to discuss how the Trust could support the FAO mission.

Public Comments

No public comments

Adjournment

9:10 pm.