



Affordable Housing Trust
550 Hanover Street, Hanover, MA 02339
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 4, 2022 – 5:00 pm

Committee Attendees

Thomas Burke, Chairman
Stephen Carroll
Steven Louko

Kevin Dyer
Vanessa O'Connor
Ginny Gilmartin

Absent

Susan Setterland

Other Attendees

Chelsea Stevens, Finance Director/Town Accountant
Tammy Murray, Director of Community Services

Opening

Chair Thomas Burke opened the meeting at 5:01 pm and made note the meeting was being recorded.

Review of Meeting Minutes

The Trust voted to accept the April 6, 2022 meeting minutes as written.

Legion Housing Affordably Restriction Update

Trustee Stephen Carroll stated the Hanover Legion Housing Board met and did not approve the MOU presented to them by the Trust. The Legion Board has recently been 80% reconstituted and did not feel the Trust needed the requested seat on their Board. The Legion Board was also against the right of first purchase language as they do not intend to ever sell the property. Trustee Carroll stated a meeting was held earlier today with members of the Trust and Legion Board present as well as the Town Manager, Finance Director and Town Assessor. The Chair of the Legion Housing Board Thomas Bailey presented an amended version of the MOU which is acceptable to the Legion Board. In the amended version, the length of set tax assessment was changed from ten (10) years to twenty (20) years, with four (4), five (5) year options to extend. Language noting the Legion Board's missions to provide housing for elderly and handicap persons was added. The Chair noted that although the c. 121A agreement has expired, the Legion Board still has a rental assistance contract in place with HUD until 2041 given Congressional appropriation of the funds. The language granting the Trust a seat on the Legion Board was removed and "right of first purchase" language was changed to "right of first refusal" which gives the Legion Board more latitude in the unlikely event a sale is needed, and the Town of Hanover does not wish to buy the property or have the resources to do so. The Chair stated the Legion Board operates at a loss each year, yet they still don't intend to sell the property. Trustee Kevin Dyer questioned what the Trust is giving up by not having a seat on the Legion Board. The Chair stated consistent communications was the goal but the Chair is hopeful the Legion Board will continue to work openly with the Trust. Trustee Carroll stated his belief that the new members of the Legion Board feel they can do a better job than past members. Trustee Steven Louko would like the existing MOU language requesting the Legion Board's audited financials amended to request them every year. Trustee Vanessa O'Connor noted her research confirms the Legion Board operates at a loss. The Chair noted that a large amount of cash assets were accumulated at one time and used to purchase the adjoining vacant lot.

The Trust voted to accept the amended version of the MOU presented by Mr. Bailey with language added regarding Legion Housing audited financials being provided annually.

Housing Production Plan

The Chair noted the Housing Production Plan was discussed by the Planning Board at their April 25, 2022 meeting. The Planning Board were not in agreement with all the strategies listed in the plan and were also concerned about the lack of resources (Planning Office staff) to implement the strategies. The Planning Board made the following motion at their meeting which was read into the record for the Trust members. *"The Planning Board supports the creation of affordable housing in the Town of Hanover and the critically important work of the Affordable Housing Trust. We would like the Trust and the Select Board to recognize there is a mismatch between the Planning Board staffing resources available and what is required in the draft Housing Production Plan. However, in response to Section 5.2 - Zoning Strategy of the draft plan, we as a Board agree our priority should be the creations of a new bylaw that recognizing affordability for all ages groups."* The Chair stated he will speak with Housing Consultant Karen Sunnarborg to determine if the responsible parties for each strategy can be amended so they realistically reflect the staffing available. The Chair also noted the VPUD Bylaw portion of the plan could be removed as the bylaw has been rescinded at Town Meeting. Trustee Stephen Carroll noted that the 2008 and 2013 Housing Production Plans had the same responsible parties listed; however, the Trust did acknowledge that staffing levels in the Planning Office have been reduced since those plans.

Program Proposals

Trustee Steven Louko updated the Trust on the draft Septic Repair Program. Mr. Louko stated the Assistant Health Agent Will Barrett has invited the Trust to attend the next Board of Health meeting in May to discuss the program. Finance Director Chelsea Stevens stated the current septic betterment program is not advertised and is simply offered to residents who appear to be struggling financially during the septic system installation or repair process. An application is filled out and reviewed by the Board of Health. Currently there are six (6) active loans and \$102,000 remaining in the fund. The Trust discussed what CPC funds can be used for. Mr. Louko stated CPC funds can only be used for septic systems of deed restricted properties. The Chair mentioned a \$500,000 payment expected from PREP and will investigate the status of that payment.

Other Business

The Trust discussed the draft job descriptions for an Affordable Housing Coordinator and/or Housing Specialist. The Chair noted the creation of the position would be helpful with the lack of staffing to implement the Housing Production Plan. Trustee Stephen Carroll explained he merged all the important roles from his job description and the one presented by Director of Community Services Tammy Murray. The salary will have to be adjusted for part-time which must remain under 20 hours to avoid the expense of benefits from the Town. The Trust discussed the various sources to fund the position. Mr. Carroll suggested perhaps a contract employee would be sufficient for the position. The Trust discussed continuing to look for funding sources and putting out inquires for qualified candidates.

The Trust discussed the process that took place in the past when a developer was working with the Trust and Town on a proposed project. The Trust discussed various strategies to develop additional affordable housing including buying market rate properties for conversion, buying foreclosures and creating an in-fill housing bylaw and/or inclusionary bylaw.

The Trust reviewed an invoice from Hill Law for \$150 associated with the status of the affordability restriction for Legion Housing. The Trust voted to approve the payment of the invoice.

Next Meetings

Wednesday, June 1, 2022

Adjournment

The meeting ended and adjourned at 6:50 pm.