

Harwich Affordable Housing Trust  
Thursday, May 21, 2020 – 2:00 PM  
Griffin Room, Town Hall, 732 Main Street, Harwich  
This meeting will be held VIA REMOTE PARTICIPATION.  
Access is available through GoToMeeting.com and live broadcast on Channel 18

## **MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair, Don Howell, Vice Chair, Larry Brophy, Clerk, Brendan Lowney, Judith Underwood.

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:** Joe Powers, Acting Town Administrator.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Charleen Greenhalgh, Town Planner, Andrea Aldana, Director of Housing Advocacy, Community Development Partnership (CDP), Pelinda Deegan, Housing Advocacy Program Manager, CDP, David Quinn, Director of Housing Development, Housing Assistance Corporation, Art Bodin, Chair of the Affordable Housing Committee, Laura Shufelt, Acting Director of Community Assistance, Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP), Katie Bosse, Program Assistant, MHP.

Meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm by Ms. Greenhalgh. Roll Call: Mr. Lowney – Present, Mr. Brophy – Present, Ms. Underwood – Present, Mr. Howell - Present.

### **Public Comment & Announcements:**

None

### **Approval of Minutes:**

- a. February 4, 2020 – Joint Meeting with Affordable Housing Committee
- b. February 13, 2020

Mr. Brophy moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Lowney seconded. Roll Call vote: Mr. Lowney – Here, Mr. Brophy – Yes, Ms. Underwood – Yes, Mr. Howell – Yes  
The motion carried by a unanimous vote. (4-0-0)

Mr. Howell asked whether the vote was for both sets of minutes. The Trust membered confirmed that is was.

### **Discussion and possible vote on Sisson Road – Presented by Laura Shufelt, Acting Director Community Assistance, Massachusetts Housing Partnership**

Mr. Howell introduced Ms. Shufelt. Ms. Shufelt, Acting Director Community Assistance introduced Ms. Bosse, Program Assistant at MHP and presented her PowerPoint on Sisson Road. She provided an overview of the due diligence work done by Bohler Engineering's site feasibility report. Mr. Howell reiterated the underlying Request For Proposals (RFP) and evaluation structure where bonus points could be granted for preferred features.

Ms. Shufelt proceeded with her presentation. She indicated that if the Trust is pursuing a Chapter 40B development, they are not required to comply with the historic district regulations but doing so could be counted as bonus points. The site plan from Bohler Engineering presents 16 units in 4 buildings which the Trust members have seen in a previous meeting. She explained that in order to get state funding, there is a 10% 3-bedroom requirement (2 units in this case).

Ms. Shufelt provided RFP guidelines. She recommended being clear and realistic with development goals that are financially feasible. Mr. Howell asked if two quads meet the threshold for funding. Ms. Shufelt confirmed that they do. At this time, Ms. Shufelt stopped her presentation to start a discussion with the Trust members about development goals to include in the RFP. Mr. Howell pointed out that Sisson Road had an existing RFP several years ago. He also added that the Harwich Junior Theater is supportive of this project.

Mr. Brophy indicated the importance of affordability and express a concern about more units than necessary. He also added his interest in expediting this project. Ms. Underwood stated that affordability is key. She is interested in having 3-bedroom units as well as speed in this project. Mr. Lowney asked about the square footage of each unit. Ms. Shufelt answered 700 square feet. He added that getting input from the historic district is very important as well as affordability. Ms. Greenhalgh asked Ms. Shufelt if the historic district compliance would be a requirement or bonus points. Ms. Howell stated that he does not want this project to slow down in working with the Historic District Commission and prefers it to be bonus points. Ms. Greenhalgh added that other boards and committees will have the opportunity to review and provide comments. Ms. Shufelt said that she will add a narrative to reflect language regarding the historic district commission.

Mr. Howell asked about the timeline of the RFP. Ms. Shufelt indicated that they will provide a first draft by the next meeting on June 18<sup>th</sup> for review and edits. Once the maximum number of units is finalized, Bohler can draft a conceptual plan. She can finalize the RFP by the July meeting and submit in August. There will be 60 days for responses. Ms. Shufelt stated that theoretically, the Trust can have a developer on board by the end of the year. Ms. Shufelt said that she would add a timeline in the RFP.

Mr. Bodin commented that the Trust is heading in the right direction. He agrees with the Trusts' development goals. He also added that he personally knows the closest abutter and thinks she will be in favor of this project. Ms. Aldana asked Ms. Shufelt if conducting community engagement will affect the timeline. Ms. Shufelt provided examples of community engagement from the towns of Brewster, Wellfleet and Provincetown. She added that the focus for Sisson Road will be affordability and design. Mr. Howell added that there will be a potential discussion around the Action Plan in the next meeting. Mr. Howell asked the Trust members for feedback on the configuration the units and affordability. Ms. Shufelt will provide options for the Trust to review at the next meeting.

### **Update Housing Coordinator contract**

Mr. Howell stated that he is planning on having a discussion with Jay Coburn, CEO of Community Development Partnership, regarding the Housing Coordinator consultant contract which ends on June 30, 2020.

### **Discussion and possible vote on Housing Assistance Corporation (HAC) request for Rental Assistance**

Mr. Quinn provided an overview of Housing Assistance Corporation's Workforce Housing Relief Fund which was designed to respond to COVID-19. Mr. Quinn stated that the goal is to raise \$1.5 million to assist 300 families over several months. They are set up with an intake process which includes a counselor. The fund supports residents who are above 50% of Area Media Income (AMI). Mr. Quinn requested that the Town of Harwich contribute to the fund and stated that each town can customize the program based on the town's need. He added that this will be critical when government relief ends at the end of the summer.

Mr. Howell stated that the Trust is not in a position to be involved. He opened up a discussion with the Trust members. Ms. Greenhalgh said that she understands the need for rental assistance program. Mr. Lowney agrees with Mr. Howell's point about prioritizing a long-term solution and sees value in a rental assistance program as well. Mr. Brophy stated that he understands what HAC is trying to accomplish and the need considering the public health crisis. Mr. Brophy recommended having further discussion at the next meeting and to have a better assessment of the need.

### **Discussion and possible vote to authorize the Chair to expend Trust funds to determine cost to move Holy Trinity Church and cost of home inspection**

Mr. Lowney recused himself from this discussion. Mr. Brophy moved to authorize the Chair to expend up to \$5,000 to determine the cost to move the Holy Trinity Church and the cost of a home inspection. Ms. Underwood seconded the motion. Roll Call: Mr. Lowney – Abstention, Mr. Brophy – Yes, Ms. Underwood – Yes, Mr. Howell – Yes. The motion passed (3-1-0).

### **Housing Coordinator Report**

Ms. Aldana provided an invitation to the Community Development Partnership's monthly Lower Cape Coronavirus Housing Response Meeting scheduled for May 22<sup>nd</sup>. She also provided an update on the Lower Cape Rental Assistance Working Group that Ms. Greenhalgh is a member of. The group is meeting weekly to develop a set of regional standards for an emergency rental assistance program.

Ms. Deegan reported that the Trust balance is \$872,018. Mr. Howell will be coordinating with Carol Coppola, Finance Director for the Town of Harwich, to confirm the Trust's financial information with regard to the Housing Coordinator contract.

### **Member Updates**

Mr. Brophy said that he is pleased with the Trust's progress on the RFP. Ms. Underwood inquired about the Housing Coordinator looking into examples of community engagement. Mr. Howell indicated that there have been previous conversations regarding community engagement and stated the challenges of having several participants in a virtual community engagement.

### **Other Business:**

None.

### **Next Meeting Date:**

June 18<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm

Mr. Brophy moved to adjourn at 3:13 pm. Roll Call: Mr. Lowney – Yes, Mr. Brophy – Yes, Ms. Underwood – Yes, Mr. Howell – Yes. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.