

TOWN OF HARWICH

Community Preservation Committee

Approved March 10, 2022

Community Preservation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes February 17, 2022

Meeting held remotely.

I Call to Order

Harwich Community Preservation Committee Meeting called to order online per Roll Call Vote by Chair Dave Nixon at 6:01 PM, on Thursday, February 17, 2022 via GoToMeeting.com. VOTE Present by Roll Call: Chair Dave Nixon - Aye; Mary Maslowski - Aye; John Ketchum - Aye; Bob Doane - Aye; Kathy Green - Aye; Elizabeth Harder – Aye; Carole Ridley – Aye; Joseph McParland III – Aye.

Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting called to order.

Guest: Brendan Lowney of the Harwich Affordable Housing Trust (AHT)

Meeting Rules read into the record by Board Secretary Jan Moore.

II GUESTS WELCOMED

No Public Comment

III APPROVAL OF MINUTES

CPC Meetings – February 3, 2022 Postponed

IV NEW BUSINESS

A. Report on Harwich Affordable Housing Trust

Chair Dave Nixon had asked Elizabeth Harder to research how other towns address their Affordable Housing Trusts.

The Harwich AHT is about four years old. Harwich has received CPA monies to have funds on account to purchase property in a timely manner without waiting for the Annual Town Meeting. Harwich is competing with developers for land purchases. Originally Harwich planned to use the Yarmouth AHT as a model to follow setting up Harwich AHT.

How does Harwich compare to other towns?

Elizabeth contacted a few neighboring towns and was able to report some of their practices:

- Orleans funds their Trust annually with about \$275,000 to \$300,000 in CPA monies. Their AHT works with their Housing Committee. They have a staff member that works on it.
- Mashpee AHT received \$300,000 in CPA funds last year, but zero funds this year.
- The Town of Yarmouth annually funds their Trust \$200,000 in CPA monies unless they are working on a big project. Yarmouth has a staff member on the CPC and a Housing Coordinator.
- Brewster only requests money for a specific project. A CPC member sits on the AHT Board. They have a paid, strong Housing Coordinator that oversees everything.
- Elizabeth will follow-up with Brewster:
 - How much do they have in their account? Harwich AHT says they need a lot of money on account to act quickly when something becomes available. What does Brewster do?
 - Did the Brewster BOS appoint the CPC member to the AHT Board?
- Elizabeth will check in with Chatham:
 - How does their AHT work?

It has been reported they have funded their AHT with over a million dollars. Chatham is far from their 10% goal of affordable housing.

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- To compare Harwich with other towns, Elizabeth will check:
 - In other towns, what percentage of CPA funds are annually contributed to their AHT?
 - Besides CPA funding, what are other income sources for the other AHTs? What about the short-term rental tax revenues? Elizabeth was asked if her Housing Authority Committee could follow up with the BOS.
 - How many years have the neighboring towns' AHT been in existence? The Brewster and Yarmouth AHTs have been around a lot longer than the Harwich AHT. Projects have moved along a lot better with a Housing Coordinator on hand to address things.
 - How much land do their trusts/towns control?

Also asked:

- Why is the CPC researching what other towns' AHT do? Is Harwich CPC wanting a representative on the Harwich AHT? How would that work?
- What is Harwich AHT's position on their next step? It was noted that acquiring land for projects is important, but so is moving the property forward.

B. Discussion on Harwich Affordable Housing Trust

Chair Dave Nixon had asked the CPC to watch the latest AHT meeting online. Committee members were asked to express their point of view of that meeting, not to rehash the meeting or step on anyone's feelings, but how can the CPC deal with the problem that the AHT doesn't understand what the CPC does. How could the CPC address their confusion? Could the committee formulate a mechanism to have communication flow both ways?

How to get the AHT to understand the CPC process and procedures? This information is on the CPC webpage and on the CPA Funding Request Applications. The first year the Trust submitted a complete, fully filled out in detail CPA Funding Request Application. The past couple of years, the AHT has submitted incomplete applications. This year's application had no information other than the name of the project and the amount requested.

After watching the AHT meeting CPC members expressed their disappointment with the AHT's lack of knowledge of the CPC. Though it was understood the AHT needs to be flexible, the CPC would like to see a complete application submitted in the future. The application for funding requests requires budgets, strategies for their project's goals, explanations of how their project fits into the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The application also states the CPC requires semi-annual update status reports. The AHT does not submit the requirements, even a broad outline, on their funding request application. Do they have an action plan? There was concern expressed over the AHT's recent confusion of how many parcels of land they control. What are their plans going forward with the land they have now? The questions the CPC asks can help their committee for the good. Effective communication is needed. Currently there is a disconnect between the AHT's applications and update status reports. The AHT asks for a large amount of CPA monies, the CPC needs to understand what they are doing with those funds. The CPC is charged with reporting to the Town at the Town Meeting that they support a project. In this case, the CPC is asked to say at Town Meeting that this is a good project the voters should support - without any info to go on.

Committee members expressed that next time they may not be able to vote in support of the AHT funding request without an action plan, a budget, a mission statement. Incomplete applications maybe need to be returned. Twice a year the CPC needs a status report on open balance projects. The AHT doesn't submit reports. It is the same funding application and rules for all applicants. Funding is a competitive process.

As a member of the Harwich Housing Committee, Mary reported that only recently the AHT and the HHC had their first ever joint meeting. They are to have annual joint meetings, where their recommendations are to be reported to the BOS. This all needs to be worked on.

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How do other towns' CPCs work with their AHTs? Brewster has a CPC member involved. Yarmouth's Housing Coordinator oversees everything and reports to the CPC.

C. Discussion to recommend Kathy Green to attend the Harwich Affordable Housing Trust Board Meetings. Kathy Green was asked if she would attend (or watch) the AHT meetings, not as a member of the CPC or AHT, but as a member of the public, and report to the CPC. Why? Just an idea because the CPC is a committee of volunteers that don't have endless hours of time to attend/watch meetings, to observe what is going on.

This idea was discussed. Kathy's reports to the CPC would not replace the AHT's need to provide update status reports to the CPC. She would not represent the CPC at their meetings. In the past she has watched AHT meetings and reported back to her REOS committee, so they knew what was going on.

It was questioned if the committee should formally organize anything. We aren't sending CPC members to attend other meetings to report back. Maybe not single out the AHT. CPC is not appointing Kathy to represent the CPC. Only the BOS can appoint. How would the AHT view Kathy attending? We don't want to appear as watch dog or making the problem bigger. Kathy would attend as a private resident, but it wouldn't open communications between the two committees because she wouldn't have a CPC voice at their meetings.

Other ideas were suggested:

- The CPC could draft a letter of committee requirements relating to the AHT's misunderstandings. Frustration was expressed because the well establish CPC guidelines/practices are written in the funding request application. The CPC webpages carry so much information. But they cannot be reading anything for their committee to be so confused.
- What about having joint CPC and AHT meetings to open communications in a public forum?
- The AHT Chair is the Town Administrator Joe Powers. Would he prefer a chair-to-chair meeting to go over future expectations? But maybe other AHT members will still have their misunderstandings.
- Maybe Dave could address the AHT as a whole and give them firsthand information, clearing up misunderstandings.

The committee recommendations' resolve: No formal actions will be taken at this time. The CPC members felt they had a very candid public discuss on this matter with a AHT Board member online during this meeting. Hopes were expressed that he would report back to the AHT.

V. Old Business

VI. Other

- Annual Town Meeting is in May. Preparations for ATM:
 - The remaining printed Tri fold CPA brochures should be distributed again.
 - John suggested making a QR code of the Tri fold brochure to be handed out at ATM. (Digital format of the tri fold.)
 - Joe will do a presentation on Channel 18. He will organize for an April airdate.
 - Elizabeth and John will work together on a press release for the Cape Cod Chronicle

VII. Agenda Points for the next Meeting

- Next two meetings scheduled: Thursday, March 10, and April 7, 2022 at 6 PM.
- March 10 meeting - Dave will report back on discussion with the AHT Chair.
- April 7 meeting - The semi-annual update status reporting. Written reports must be submitted. Oral reports should be limited to five minutes to allow time for CPC questions; no need to read written report.

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VIII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Elizabeth Harder, seconded by Mary Maslowski to adjourn.

VOTE by Roll Call: Chair Dave Nixon - Aye; Mary Maslowski - Aye; John Ketchum - Aye; Bob Doane - Aye; Kathy Green - Aye; Elizabeth Harder – Aye; Carole Ridley – Aye; Joseph McParland III – Aye.

Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment at 7:36 PM.