

AMEND THE CODE OF HARWICH GENERAL BYLAWS – CHAPTER 140
HARWICH AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

ARTICLE 40: To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of M.G.L. ch.44, §55C to establish an Affordable Housing Trust Fund; and further to amend the Code of the Town of Harwich to add a new Chapter 140 “Harwich Affordable Housing Trust” to read as follows:

Affordable Housing Trust

Section 140-1 – Appointments – As authorized by Chapter 44, §55C, the Board of Selectmen shall appoint 5 Trustees, one of whom shall be the Town Administrator or designee, and one of whom shall be a member of the Board of Selectmen; the remaining three (3) Trustees shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen for two-year staggered terms.

Section 140-2 – Duties and Responsibilities

- A. The Trust shall possess all of the powers and authority set forth in M.G.L. c.44, §55C. The Selectman member of the Trust shall report to the full Board of Selectmen on purchases or sales of real property.
- B. In addition, the Affordable Housing Trust shall work with the Harwich Housing Committee to develop an affordable housing plan, which shall be updated each year and a copy presented to the Board of Selectmen.

Section 140-3 – Removal – A member may be removed from the Trust by the Board of Selectmen by a majority vote for cause after a public meeting or by failure to reappoint.

And to act fully thereon. By request of Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen.

Explanation: The Affordable Housing Trust, allowed under MGL Chapter 44, Section 55 C, would expedite the Town’s ability to partner with private developers and convert existing housing to affordable housing. The purpose of the Trust is to provide a public benefit and a suitable living environment by increasing the access to and availability of safe and decent affordable housing to Harwich residents, while maintaining quality of life for all. Additionally, the Trust will provide for the creation and preservation of affordable housing in municipalities for the benefit of low and moderate-income households. Yarmouth, Norwell, Lincoln, Dartmouth, Cambridge, Upton, Sudbury, Georgetown and Scituate are some examples of successful Affordable Housing Trusts.

A key part in establishing the Trust and one of the most effective ways our community can jump-start a housing effort is to fund the hiring of a part time Housing Coordinator. Funding for this has been requested through a CPA request. The Housing Coordinator would work closely with the Trust to provide support services for housing-related programs, projects, and affordable housing initiatives.