

Selectboard & Planning Board Housing Subcommittee Meeting via Zoom
Joint meeting with The Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board
Wednesday, October 24, 2023

Approved

1. CALL TO ORDER HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING – Chairperson Leigh Davis called to order the Selectboard and Planning Board Housing Subcommittee meeting at 5:30 pm.
2. Chairperson Davis called the role: Leigh Davis, “present,” Malcolm Fick, “present,” Jeremy Higa, “present,” Garfield Reed, “present.” Attending from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board: Fred Clark, Chair, Amanda Timpane, Vice-Chair, William Cooke, Garfield Reed, and Joseph Method.
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES –
 - a. Mr. Reed moved to approve the minutes of September 27, 2023. Mr. Higa seconded the motion. All voted yes.
4. SUBCOMMITTEE’S ANNOUNCEMENTS/STATEMENTS
 - a. Mr. Fick congratulated Chairperson Davis for her presentation to the state legislature and discussions with the governor aimed at promoting the passage of legislation enabling a local transfer tax to support affordable housing.
 - b. Ms. Davis said that a recent announcement concerning housing included substantial funding and a proposal for “seasonal gateway” communities that could provide housing funds for towns such as ours.
5. NEW BUSINESS: JOINT MEETING DISCUSSION
 - a. Mr. Clark began by stating that the Trust needs a steady source of income to close the gap on affordability.
 - b. Ms. Timpane described various initiatives that the Trust has begun. They include
 - Direct assistance,
 - A down payment assistance program,
 - An ADU pilot project,
 - Grants to larger organizations,
 - Acquiring properties below market
 - c. Mr. Fick began a discussion of affordability restrictions by asking if the Trust grants are restricted.
 - Ms. Timpane answered that they are restricted.
 - Ms. Davis asked if the restrictions are permanent or for a time period.
 - Mr. Cooke responded that the Habitat project affordability restrictions are permanent. Mr. Clark said anything purchased is restricted permanently but that the duration of a particular restriction may vary for other types of grants.
 - Ms. Davis asked what is a reasonable timeframe for affordability restrictions for CPA grants. Mr. Clark said the answer would require some homework.
 - d. Ms. Timpane suggested the need to present a slate of multiple ideas to give the big picture and avoid the trend to shoot down individual proposals when they are presented one at a time. The group agreed that a comprehensive community outreach could be beneficial in this regard.

- e. The group discussed Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) and the difficulties promoting their benefits.
 - Mr. Fick described the efforts of the Planning Board to eliminate ADU red tape through by-laws adopted by recent Town Meetings. He said the changes have not resulted in many ADU's, if any. He suggested that the failure may have been a lack of education and outreach following passage of the by-laws.
 - Ms. Davis said that there is a reluctance to becoming a landlord in Massachusetts because of strong tenant rights laws.
 - Mr. Clark said that Brandee Nelson, the Chair of the Planning Board, asked the Trust to consider an outreach program for ADU's.
 - Mr. Method said that there is a need for an inventory of affordable housing opportunities. Using that, a targeted mailing could be made to properties that could contain an ADU.
- f. Mr. Clark reported that the Trust is looking into the AG's Abandoned Properties program. Any action with this program would require partnerships with organizations such as Construct or CDC.
- g. Ms. Davis asked if there was a role for consultants at the Trust. Ms. Timpane said it was not a good idea. Mr. Method disagreed, saying that the Trust already uses consultants and contractors to perform the work.
 - Mr. Fick asked if staff rather than consultants could be helpful. Mr. Clark was opposed. Ms. Davis pointed out that a number of housing initiatives, such as the creation of an affordable housing inventory mentioned earlier by Mr. Method, would require staff support.
 - Mr. Higa said the housing need is broader than that defined as "affordable," so there must be programs beyond those within the Trust's charter. He suggested that any housing staff should be town-wide with support for Trust programs.

6. Next meeting dates:

- a. Wednesday, November 8, 2023, at 5:30 pm. (Subcommittee only)
- b. Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at 6:00 pm. (Joint meeting)
- c. Citizens Speak – Amy Turnbull expressed concerns about the ADU proposal as it is written..

7. Subcommittee's Time: Members had no further comments.

8. Media Time: No media members requested time.

9. Adjournment: Mr. Reed moved to adjourn. Mr. Fick seconded. Ms. Davis adjourned the meeting at 6:30 pm without objection.

Respectfully submitted,

Malcolm Fick, Vice Chairperson