



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

Affordable Housing Trust Fund
101 Main Street
Ashland, MA 01721

MINUTES

May 14, 2020

Zoom Virtual Meeting called to order at 4:05 pm by Steve.

In attendance: Steve Greenberg, Debra Griffin, David Rosenblum, Dan Shea, Joe Magnani

Guests: Jenn Ball, Emma Snellings

Emergency assistance presentation from Jenn Ball, Asst town planner and Emma Snellings, Ashland planning department. Jenn explained how the rental assistance program could be administered in house with town employees. This includes Emma Snellings, human resources (Cara and Jenn W.), and Carol and Brittany in accounting. It was explained that the Ashland Emergency Fund (AEF) is a rolling fund using human resources to identify those needing assistance.

The possibility of using federal CARES act money was brought up. It was noted that CARES act money might be able to be used for broad mortgage and rental assistance.

Joe, and others, were concerned that administering an emergency assistance program was a great deal of work and that we did not want to burden the town staff. Jenn and Emma said that they felt the town could handle this.

It was reported that the AEF grants are limited to \$2000 for a 3 month period and can be granted for additional time. The AEF has not seen increases in rental needs (yet). Need for food has increased. The AEF also provides utility bill assistance—paying the utilities directly.

We discussed the Ashland AHT aid preferences brought up by Emma in the discussion questions in her document. Possibilities discussed were that need should be evaluated by human services, money granted for 3 month period,

setting income limits based on AMI, rolling deadline or lottery. Emma said that setting parameters for how the program is working is very important. Dan brought up possible preferences for veterans, teachers, police, fire and municipal workers. Steve thought that this might not be possible. We thought that when an applicant is eligible, then grant amount should be based on predetermined rules (such as AMI, number of children, etc.). No conclusions were drawn.

The trustees thanked Emma for her detailed report about rental assistance programs in other towns.

Steve explained 367 America Boulevard potential purchase. The property has an affordable housing deed rider and is financed through Middlesex Saving Bank. The trust would buy the property then get the property ready for resale and resell the property. Price and 2% fee going to the Trust is set by DHCP regulations. Motion to purchase, rehab and market 367 America Boulevard made by Steve, seconded by Debra, passed 5-0.

Motion to approve minutes of 4/29/20 made by Debra, seconded by Dan, passed 4-0-1.

Debra reminded us that we had previously agreed that future agendas would be sent to us before being posted.

Next meeting set for May 28, 2020 at 4:00 pm. Date could change based on information gathered by Emma and Jenn.

Motion to adjourn at 6:17 pm by Debra, seconded by David, passed 5-0.

Documents discussed:

Town of Ashland Rental Assistance Program Development report