



Town of Ashland

M A S S A C H U S E T T S

Affordable Housing Trust Fund
101 Main Street
Ashland, MA 01721

MINUTES

June 17, 2021

Trustees in attendance: Steve Greenberg, Joe Magnani, Debra Griffin, David Rosenblum, Alan Galiwango, Bernadette Lunkuse, Barbra Sekesogundu Simon

Trustees absent:

Guests: Emma Snellings, Debbie Maruka Hoak from Habitat for Humanity, Henry Rauch II from Habitat for Humanity, Liz Rust

Zoom Meeting called to order at 5:01pm by Steve.

Debbie Maruka Hoak of the Metro West/Worcester Habitat for Humanity organization gave a presentation of possible affordable homes on the Olive Street property. Debbie said that Habitat has collaborated with affordable housing trusts after being invited to do so by the trusts. They work with DHCD and work with town representatives on projects. They have built on town owned land and on in-fill lots. The Olive St property is a big parcel with 310 feet of frontage. This allows for 2 homes with minimum of 150 foot frontage per Ashland zoning rules. Habitat would respond to an RFP from the town to build the homes with deed restrictions in perpetuity and expect a subsidy from the town. The Habitat homes proposed are 1500 square feet with 3 bedrooms including a first floor room and bathroom. It typically takes 12-15 months to complete a Habitat home. Habitat can carry the mortgages and aim for 30-50% of AMI for owners income. "Sweat equity" of 400-500 hours by family and friends helps build the homes. Alan asked about lottery process to reach diverse home buyers. Debbie said that Habitat will do marketing and run a lottery for the homes. Joe mentioned advertising in newspapers and on WACA cable. A trustee asked about preferences for local residents and making parents of Ashland school students aware of the homes. Henry suggested contacting the religious community in town. Steve

brought up having a multi-home development with affordable set aside. Henry said that Habitat can partner with for profit developers. The Olive St property has town water, will need septic systems, has enough buildable land not in wetlands and an existing structure would need to be demolished. The property was acquired by the town of Ashland from Weston Nurseries restructure and CPC funds.

Joe will follow up with Henry about the Olive St property.

Steve asked about the 30% of AMI possibility. Henry said this helps single mothers and can increase diversity.

We talked to Liz Rust, affordable housing consultant, who was invited to our meeting. Liz does affordable housing consulting with a municipal lens. She works with Regional Housing Authority organizations and with private clients. Liz can provide compliance monitoring for homes with no named monitoring agent. This is owned homes in Ashland. Joe asked if spot visits were included in monitoring. Liz said they were not included. Liz can have a per hour fee for additional services in her contract with the town. How to contact property owners was discussed. Steve said that he did not prefer certified mail. Liz said that email works well and that she will establish contact with the owners. Steve asked about how contract would be written. Liz said that the towns usually provide the contract.

Emma updated us on the Rental and Mortgage assistance program. The program is continuing. At our last update \$160,000 had been spent. Total is now about \$170,000 with 2 new applications approved and 52 applications in the pipeline. \$45,900 of the assistance has come from Ashland Housing Trust money. Emma said that landlords have been referring their tenants to the program.

Emma updated us on the Federal ERAP assistance program. It is limited to people with 80% AMI income or less and affected by Covid. The program is rental assistance only with no mortgage assistance. ERAP assistance is for 12 months. The town has been referring people to ERAP.

Emma told us that there are now 6 responses to the survey and that a reminder will be going out soon.

Debra brought up action items. She asked about translations of the rental assistance information. Emma said that this was in progress. Emma also said she would talk to Ashley about having rental assistance information in the town newsletter. Debra brought up adding "how heard about the assistance program" question to the application. Emma will take care of that.

Alan brought up Liz Rust services. Steve said that her monitoring services should be in \$3000-5000 annual cost range. Steve will work out contract with Jenn Ball. We will vote on hiring after contract is ready.

We continued discussion of Habitat and Olive St. Joe suggested trading Cherry St property for Olive Street property. Steve thought we should approach the Select Board for engineering funding to see potential of Olive St property. Joe said he will put this on Select Board agenda of June 30 meeting. Joe thought that Habitat request for \$75,000 per unit from the town was a good use of our funds. Joe would like all units on Olive Street property to be affordable. We should be at June 30th Select Board meeting when Olive St is discussed.

Motion to approve minutes of meeting of May 20, 2021 as written made by Joe, seconded by Alan, passed 5-0.

Steve updated us on transfers of affordable units. A town employee was interested in an affordable unit and will see if they qualify. Steve said DHCP will say how property can be sold. Joe noted that seller gets market appraisal minus affordable discount (30%) when selling. Steve thought that sale of 72 Raymond Marchetti will need a large search for buyers.

We discussed filling Debra's seat on the Trust when her term expires in August. Barbara nominated Bernadette to be recommended for the seat. Barbara and Bernadette are associate members of the trust. Recommendation is for the full voting member seat that Debra held to go to Bernadette; Steve made the motion, Alan seconded, passed 5-0.

Motion to adjourn made by Debra, seconded by David, passed 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Next meeting will be August 19, 2021 5-7pm.

Documents discussed:

Habitat for Humanity presentation