

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Affordable Housing Committee, Town of Oak Bluffs, held on Jan 17th 2023 at 4.30pm at Room 110, Town Hall.

Present:

K. Mark Leonard, Chair
Jim Bishop & dog
Katherine Donahue

Attending:

Maura McGroarty
David Vigneault

En Passant:

Deborah Potter

1. Call to order

Chair Mark Leonard called the meeting to order at 4.34 pm.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Of Jan 3rd 2023, were passed as presented; as proposed by Katherine Donahue, seconded by Jim Bishop, and with the Chair's concurrence.

3. Updates from the Chair

- i. The site visit went well, with no questions, but with developer discussion; extension notice has been sent out to all, it has been extended to Mar 31st 2023.
- ii. Chair noted that since David Vigneault was a little late this evening, items 4 and 5 on the Agenda would be switched around. We will proceed with the Noyes Application Review when David gets in.

4. The Warrant Article request

Chair opened with the question: how much should we ask for and why?

4.1 Jim: we need to replenish our available Affordable Housing Trust funding for projects; we should ask for \$200,000.00 each year; if we need additional funds, we can always go to the CPC.
Katie: can we ask for funds just for the Trust? Jim: no, we need to have a reason for asking.
Discussion resulted in a figure between 200 to 250K.

4.2 discussion about a Pilot Program on Rental Assistance followed – to work on identifying those in need. A key aspect hinges on pulling in landlords to participate. David Vigneault said that with rents at 2500-3500, landlords would be interested if we offered a 50% subsidy. get the involvement of those who need housing, they might be able to help find landlords. There

are currently 52 landlords island wide, with 14 from Oak Bluffs; also, that municipal workers constitute a 'sweet spot' that we've barely scratched;

Jim, along the same lines, emphasized renting to town employees.

Chair noted that we are not necessarily locked into income levels as being the only factor defining eligibility. Further, what would it take to get homeowners to do year-round rentals?

Also, that Terri from DCRHA had given him a rough estimate for a 'test' covering 5 pilot situations, and it would require between 85-90 K to run it.

David felt that by pushing limits, new discovery may enable redefinition; it would be excellent to discover who has the need but doesn't quite fit the current eligibility profile.

4.3 Motion discussed to ask for 250,00.00 for the Trust's projects (Southern Tier), and 80,000.00 for the pilot program.

4.4 Deborah Potter, Town Administrator (at the door): Ms. Potter's comments -

a. a proposal for 250 K would be difficult to accommodate from certified free cash; better to use several separate requests instead; if one fails, another may well succeed; further, note how warrant article proposals work with the 2 Town Meeting categories we have – the Special Town Meeting where approved warrants are given money within that calendar year itself; and the annual Town Meeting which clears costs for the FY to come.

4.5 Chair thanked Ms Potter for her suggestions, and she left the meeting at this point.

4.6 Further to Ms. Potter's comments and suggestions, the Committee summed up its intent on the Warrant issue as follows, seeking:

i. \$100,000.00 as replenishment for the Affordable Housing Trust

ii. \$100,000.00 to IHT for Southern Tier

iii. \$80,000.00 for the pilot program on rental assistance

Motion to support the above 3 items in a Warrant to a special Town Meeting was subsequently made, as proposed by Jim Bishop, seconded by Katherine Donahue, and agreed to by all members present. Chair will follow up.

David noted that clearing the above through a Warrant at the Special Meeting would also mean we could reach out to local Landlords before they made summer commitments.

4.7 Chair noted that he would begin work immediately on drawing up the parameters of the pilot program, and also asked if there was any other Warrant proposal that should be considered at this point. No further suggestions.

5. Noyes Apt Application Process

5.1 David did a walkthrough of his draft presentation on the Noyes rental agreement application; main points are:

5.2 First page of the application – referred to as the 'poster' page, would be sent out by email, and it provided a quick look at the offer.

5.3 Time period allowed for the application process would be 9 business days.

5.4 Incomplete applications with 8-10 missing items would not be corrected after the past due date.

5.5 language assistance will be strengthened per an information meeting event, where helpers would walk interested potential applicants through the paperwork involved – what info is required, where and how to ascertain such, and the time frame involved, with explanations of terms and definitions as needed.

5.6 final review and verification – and possible assistance as justified, as with folk who come in seeking help to complete the form. There has been a fairly high degree of incomplete applications in the past, and DCRHA has reworked the application process to make it more user-friendly.

5.7 on the time frame for sending these out: Chair noted that he wants to get the finished application to Wendy Brough who can route it to municipal employees; after some discussion from all present, David concluded that the final application would be ready by Monday next ie Jan 23rd, and would go out by Tue; it would be posted on appropriate websites – DCRHA, Town, Library.

6. Member Updates

6.1 Katie will work with the Chair on getting the Warrant article together.

7. Public Comment

Questions from Maura on

i. Leite property - current status? Still being cleaned up; once done, markers (at points now blocked by vehicles) will be placed demarcating property lines.

ii. And the property's ownership? Is AHC's; and Town Counsel is working on clearing Title Deeds; after that, it will create some 3 Lots for AHC work.

8. Adjournment

There being no other business, Chair entertained a motion for adjournment. So proposed by Katherine Donahue and seconded by Jim Bishop. Chair then declared the meeting adjourned at 6:10 pm with all members present in favor.

R G Eli, Secretary
Affordable Housing Committee
Town of Oak Bluffs