

Minutes of the meeting of the Affordable Housing Committee, Town of Oak Bluffs, held on Jul 5th 2022 at 5pm.

Present:

K. Mark Leonard, Chair

Jim Bishop

Peter Bradford

Katherine Donahue

Absent (apologies)

Mark Crossland

Attending:

Phil Cordella

Maura McGroarty

David Vigneault

Phillippe Jordi

David Ennis

1. Call to order

Chair Mark Leonard called the meeting to order at 5.01pm.

2. Minutes of past meetings

a. Minutes of the Jun 7th meeting were passed, as proposed by Jim Bishop, seconded by Katie Donahue, and with all members present in favor.

b. Minutes of the Affordable Housing Committee Trust's joint special meeting with the Selectboard were approved, as proposed by Peter Bradford and seconded by Jim Bishop, with approval from those present.

c. Minutes of the Mar 1st meeting were also approved, as proposed by Peter Bradford with Katie Donahue seconding, with approval from those present.

d. Minutes of May 3rd have yet to be approved because of the continued lack of a representative quorum to confirm them; Chair said that he has asked the Secretary to check procedure with Open Meeting Law and report to him.

3. Updates from the Chair

a. Chair on Noyes – the Skogstrom contractor was awarded the contract, and managed to bill 78K from the Grant money available before the June 30th deadline; Jim mentioned framing, electrical, and the possibility of changing materials to reduce costs.

b. the meeting of the 28th looked at transferring land from the Resident Homesite Committee to the Affordable Housing Trust; however, this was not done, and apparently cannot happen that

way as our Town Administrator has found documentation indicating that the Selectboard have authority on this function. How it may be done should be determined before too long.

c. on the Veteran's project at Bellevue, title research work is progressing; Pete noted that AHC had done the Title review work already, and Jim concurred with this; Chair agreed, and said that he had found material pertaining to the Bellevue Title dated 2017, and had forwarded same to Town Management, which is now looking through it. Linwood is still a work in progress

d. Chair has been appointed to the Housing Bank Review Committee, with one representative from each Town; the first meeting is this Thursday.

e. Pete had a question on 'changing materials to reduce cost' i.e., whose cost? Chair verified this as referring to 'our cost'.

e. Jim's question on nitrogen credit transfer – Chair moved to Katie on this, as Katie had reached out to Chris Alley about this. Katie shared that thus far it has been inconclusive, unless we specified a location; the idea is to retain the nitro and divvy it up on a case by case basis; Pete noted, however, that once property is transferred nitrogen credits cannot be brought in after that fact; they must be transferred in before property changes hands.

Pete also stated that we need to clarify deed restrictions, if any, regarding such transfers; the Bellevue property, for instance, has Lot lines.

Katie will seek specifics for Bellevue; will speak to Chris Alley again; and at her request, Peter will assist as needed.

4. Noyes

Covered under Chair's updates.

5. The Municipal Housing Trust

Chair brought up the request from IHT/IA for funding of 300K. They had approached CPC for 400K but had been granted only 200K. Chair also noted that CPC support covered hard costs and did not cover soft costs.

Chair did a screen share to show the state of the Housing Trust's cash holdings and reviewed expenditure thus far. If we support the new request from IHT, it could go to the next Selectboard meeting and then a further meeting of the Housing Trust; however, it would leave us with a balance of 140K. Chair then asked for comments from members about this.

Pete started off with a question about rental income and where it should end up – in the general fund or back to the Housing Trust which had provided project support in the first place. His point, as the Chair noted, is significant. The Trust has no income stream, and income derived from such rental would be a start.

Jim spoke for a bit on 'wasteful construction practices' and wondered about the degree to which costs might be brought down.

David Vigneault, at the Chair's invitation, mentioned that IHT has done good building work within acceptable norms. He also noted that it is not a given that money expended on affordable housing by the Housing Trust should see returns going into the general fund. He further noted that the lack of 'elected leadership support' on such issues was regrettable.

Peter restated his main concern – that the Trust does not have an income stream; reducing its available cash needs careful consideration.

Chair added that he has been invited to the Finance Committee to speak on Affordable Housing issues and will keep members informed of when this is going to happen. Chair also noted that the Housing Bank could possibly be a revenue source for the Housing Trust. Chair then invited Philippe to speak on the request made.

Philippe stated that IHT's submissions to MVC and to the State needs soft costs support in order to be at its most effective when presenting and discussing engineering and architectural specifications.

Jim responded that the Committee would probably need more time to review the nature of the request.

Chair asked about the timeline for the request, and David Ennis said that the time involved is about 3 months; Philippe said that they would provide a written statement about the costs needed.

6. Member Updates

Katie confirmed with Peter that she would look to him with questions if needed as she researched and confirmed nitrogen transfer protocols with Chris Alley. Peter affirmed this. No further member updates.

7. Public Comment

1. Phil Cordella had a question about the presentation by Freeman et al at the last meeting on June 7th on what they call Green Villa - Elio Silva's former project. Is it an AH project? Chair answered that it is. Details are in the June 7th Minutes.

2. Maura asked the following questions: "When a Developer comes in to work for Oak Bluffs Town, is it common to ask for soft cost expenses/support, as is happening in this situation?" "Is funding support to get started not part of the formal proposal?"

Chair picked up the first question and inquired if members of the Committee had any responses; Peter noted that this had happened before in the past. Maura wondered why it would not be part of the proposal. Both Chair and Phillippe noted that in this case soft costs had been clearly spelled out, both in the RFP and in IHT's initial proposal.

8. Adjournment

Chair noted that unless there was new direction from the Governor's Office, the next meeting would be an in-person meeting. Zoom meetings would end on July 15th 2022. There being no further issues, Chair looked to a motion to adjourn, accordingly proposed by Peter Bradford and seconded by Katherine Donahue, upon which Chair Mark Leonard declared the meeting adjourned.

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