

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Affordable Housing Committee, Town of Oak Bluffs, held on Tue Aug 2nd, 2022 at 5pm, at the Town Hall, Conference Room # 110.

Present:

K. Mark Leonard, Chair.

Jim Bishop

Katherine Donahue

Mark Crossland

Absent:

Peter Bradford

Attending:

Maura McGroarty

Skip Finley

Karen W. Finley

Dan Slatalla

Linda Call

Mark Almeida

Jacqueline Diggs

1. Call to order

Chair Mark Leonard called the meeting to order at 5.06 pm.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the July 19th 2022 meeting were passed, as proposed by Jim Bishop and seconded by Katherine Donahue, with the Chair and Mark Crossland in agreement; minutes passed, accepted as written.

3. Updates from the AHC Chair

3.1 Chair has updated the Subsidized Housing Inventory listing for Oak Bluffs; no changes from 2 years ago, and still at 117 units; however, Habitat for Humanity has managed to put up 3 houses since – 17 Oak Ave, 3 Eastville, and 148 Edgartown-Vineyard Haven Rd.

3.2 Chair is now also on the Housing Bank Review Committee, which is currently working on terms and definitions.

3.3 The Noyes project is still in the permitting process; State funding for this has not come in yet.

4. The Bellevue RFP Discussion

Chair Mark Leonard provided a brief recap on how the Veteran's project had begun at Jessica Lane but had run aground because of unforeseen Title issues that needed a length of time to resolve; as such, the Committee had decided to relocate the project. Examining current options, Bellevue had been the best choice, with no restrictions and a clear Title.

4.2 Chair then turned to the Bellevue RFP draft, which has been in process for some time as the Jessica Lane RFP draft, per the Veteran's model specifications of 10-12 units. The model is based on that of the Veteran's group on the Cape, from which pertinent items have been gleaned, as with the usefulness of a kitchenette.

4.3 Jim added that the Cape & Island's Veterans Management group are bringing their experience and skills to the project in handling tenants, eligibility and all such related matters.

4.4 Chair further added that the Veterans Group will handle all restrictions that apply to tenants - their obligations, and related security checks.

4.5 Question was raised as to whether there is a well on the Bellevue property; Chair responded that it would be checked out.

4.6 Dan Slatella raised what he called a 'big picture' question of the effect of the project on property values, and that he had just bought his property in 2021. He also asked if it was a 'long term' project for Veterans. He noted that his house address had not been on the initial list sent out and that he was only now realizing that the project was already going forward.

4.7 Chair explained that the RFP draft had been in process for some 18 months, and during that time many discussions and much effort had been made with the Jessica Lane residents. The goal of the Committee is to discuss pertinent issues with the residents, review options, and choose the most supportive and pragmatic solutions.

4.8 J Diggs asked how long the project would house a Veteran for – three years or more? Skip Finley said he thought that folks would be there for a lot longer. Chair responded that it would depend on each individual case and would be worked out

with the case manager on an individual basis but could well end up being between 3 – 5 years.

4.9 Jim noted that there are other affordable housing projects being worked on that would be available for the residents to consider moving on to.

4.10 Chair explained that the project serves to meet the needs of MV Veterans and not off island veterans.

4.11 Maura McGroarty asked about who exactly was funding the project. Chair responded that the Town retains ownership of the land and will lease the property and the developer will fund with State and private funds for the Veterans support and ongoing costs.

4.12 Jim informed all present that the Veterans Committee, of which he is a member, is holding 2 places for residents to serve on the Committee, so that they could be an intrinsic part of the process. He also shared information about the next meeting.

4.13. Question raised about road access location; Chair's response is that it is on Bellevue Ave.

4.14 Jim pointed out that the original building concept has shifted; it has been improved to include space for a caregiver.

4.15 Chair pointed out that the design goal is to have the building be as identical as possible to those in the neighborhood.

4.16 Question on tree clearing; Chair's response is that survey work will show what needs to be cleared, if any. Bellevue runs along the Town's property line, so the home should be closer to the road. On the status of the SHI, Chair noted that we currently have 117 homes, and need to get 100 more done to be in compliance with State requirements. Of the needful, 60 will come from the Southern Tier project, so we are getting there.

4.17 Question about resident age; Chair's response is that most Veterans are in their 30's or older.

4.18 Karen Finley raised concerns to which Chair responded that those would be addressed as we proceeded through the process. Chair shared process steps briefly, from selecting a Developer to the management process; Chair stressed that all Town residents get to share and participate in this. State funding on these projects will soon be released, so application must be made by the end of October; if all goes as we hope, we will break ground either next Summer or Fall.

As the discussion came to an end, Chair thanked all participants for their views and questions.

5. Member Updates

5.1 Katie has a listing of abutters names and email addresses for Bellevue; on the matter of nitrogen credits, she reported a bit of a runaround from building – to engineer to lawyer! Nevertheless, the process remains.

5.2 Chair did a screen share on The Ancient Way that has been referred to by MVC; it is a walking trail and is nowhere near the Bellevue project location. Chair also noted that the BOS will need to formally agree on and to the release of the RFP for Bellevue at their August 9th meeting.

6. Public Comment

Maura noted that she had seen an article in the newspapers some weeks back about the Veteran's project, and that it had come from MV Times and appeared somewhat misleading, since AHC is the driving force for the project; the Bellevue area folk did not know of the project until AHC reached out. Chair agreed with the sentiment.

7. Adjournment

There being no other business, the Chair looked to a motion to adjourn, subsequently proposed by Jim Bishop, and seconded by Mark Crossland, upon which Chair Mark Crossland declared the meeting adjourned.

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