

**Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Affordable Housing Committee, Town of Oak Bluffs,
held on Tue Oct 4th 2022 at 5pm at rm #110 Town Hall.**

Present:

K. Mark Leonard, Chair
Jim Bishop
Pete Bradford
Mark Crossland, Planning
Katherine Donahue

Attending:

Greg Orcutt, Habitat for Humanity
Craig Nicholson, Affirmative Investments
Abigail Rosen, MV Times
David Vigneault, DCRHA
Maura McGroarty, Finance

1. Call to Order

Chair Mark Leonard called the meeting to order at 5.02pm.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting

Of Sep 20th 2022 were cleared, as proposed by Pete Bradford and seconded by Jim Bishop, with all members present in agreement.

3. Chair's Update

Chair reported a meeting he had with Ryan Ruley, Gail Barmakian and Deb Potter over moving the Veterans Project to Bellevue and getting the RFP out; outcome is that the proposal will go to the BOS on Tue and if approved, will go on the Nov 1st special Town Meeting warrant.

4. The Southern Tier Update

4.1 Chair turned to Craig Nicholson of Affinity Investments for a project update.

They had a Team meeting, the site plan needs a few tweaks, and after that the application can go to MVC by the end of this week; that will be followed by a staff meeting within the next 30 days; and with the application moving from LUPC to MVC, it would be good if it can all be done by December; in the meantime, they expect to have enough approval (not yet in written form) to go on to meet with the Zoning Board in November, and so expect to submit the Comp 40B to the Zoning Board in early November;

Assuming MVC gets done by December, they could go for a Jan or Feb public Hearing; meanwhile, they will submit their pre-application for State funding, and if accepted, go for the full application in Jan; once the construction financing process gets done by the 1st quarter in 2024, they will begin an 18 month construction schedule.

4.2 Craig confirmed with the Chair that construction would only start in Mar-Apr 2024, and explained that this was due to the time frame of the funding cycles, from pre-app in Oct/Nov to full application in Jan/Feb; then awards are announced around July 2023; once there, they could finish up drawings, put out the RFP, and decide on general contractors; so the earliest they could get started would be around the end of 2023; he also noted that this all assumed that the funding application would be approved first time around; if not, more work would be needed and it would mean at least a 6 month time frame add on.

Chair also inquired about the Grant applied for on the project's road work?

Craig responded that they might know in November, per his last month's conversation with the application reviewer.

4.3 Jim said that at the last Town Meeting some 26 million for sewerage and wastewater work had been approved; the engineering study involved mentioned building mini-plants in certain areas; so it might be well worth talking to the wastewater department about this project and of mini plant possibilities.

Craig said they'd discussed the project with Gail Barmakian and learned about the ongoing plan to expand the town's sewer system; he said that at present they have a Kleen-Tu designed nitrogen system in mind, essentially a mini plant; but he thought Jim's was a good idea and would be in touch over with them on it.

4.4 Chair had attended a Meshacket Commons brief last week, and noted that current demand for 1 room apartments is high; Keane's Way had some 30 applicants for a few available 1 room units.

Craig agreed that the 2 bedroom market is currently soft, but they anticipate a marketing report on this; on Keane's Way, he noted that TCB is managing that effort, and his folk would be talking to them about Morgan Woods and applicant numbers.

4.5 Chair asked when community engagement could be expected?

Craig mentioned Oct 25th with a Zoom meeting; he will work with AHC and IHT on publicity issues and on writing to abutters.

Chair mentioned the Meshacket public hearings as a good example and said that AHC would be glad to help get the word out. He also stated that the renaming of the Southern Tier project would go before the BOS next Tue.

5. Habitat for Humanity update

5.1 Chair turned to Greg Orcutt for an update on the Eastville and Prospect projects.

Greg started with the Prospect work – it has moved fast; a 700 square foot house, with 2 bedrooms and a bath, with funding help from CPC and the Oak Bluffs AHC Housing Trust; total cost stands between 305 - 310K;

Building supply costs have been going up, but volunteer and donor help made substantial difference; Mark Crossland with the landscaping needs; Jim Bishop with gutters for the building; Archibald Electrical Services at half off; Bob Crane for appliances at half off; Grant City Electric for materials either below or at no cost; Richie Combra helped out on road issues; considerable

harvesting was done for kitchen cabinetry, doors and the like; Habitat has really appreciated working with Oak Bluffs and the level of support that's been given.

Chair asked about a ribbon date? Greg said that the plan is for an Oct 22nd dedication, and Habitat will send out invitations and arrange for press cover.

5.2 Greg moved on to Eastville – 2 bedrooms, 1 and a half baths; about 800 square feet; the septic plan has been approved, building permits have been filed, materials have been lined up, and work will start in Nov; the architectural plan has been donated by Hutker Architects; completion might well be in the summer of 2023; applications will close on Oct 14th; they expect about 35 applications.

5.3 Jim asked about the expected monthly payment for Eastville; Greg said that it would be around 1 K monthly, on a zero-interest mortgage; if they decide to leave in years to come, they would need to make total repayment, with interest.

5.4 Pete asked about the process of getting units on to the Oak Bluffs housing inventory; Chair noted that this was a 2-step process and he would work on it with Greg; Chair thanked Greg for the good work. Greg expressed great satisfaction at the way things had gone and said that Habitat would be interested in other Oak Bluffs affordable housing possibilities. Chair responded that AHC does have other possibilities that may be explored, going forward.

6. Green Villa 40B response input: (dialogue summary format)

Chair: info packet with the 40B application was sent out to all members; our response is due by the end of this week to the Town Administrator.

Jim: the no. of units has been reduced? Chair: still at 52.

Mark Crossland: Planning did a major traffic study for this area and this project won't work as is; it's too high, too long, and the single building, the way it is, won't fit in with the area; it's set some 315 feet back from the road, and there's a large parking lot in front; the entire traffic study is on the Planning Board's website.

Pete: As our Project heads to MVC, we are no longer a sole project, and there are now 2 projects on the same timing, though we are a little ahead. Also, possibility of endangered species?

Chair: confirmed no endangered species.

Chair: Town Administrator's response might be that we already have a major project in hand.

Pete: in Edgartown they had both funding and permits and are moving forward.

Jim: CPC can bond to raise funds.

Pete: Southern Tier can turn to CPC for funding support.

Jim: spoke with Philippe Jordi last week; told him to get their application in before the 28th and not miss the current round of CPC funding.

Chair: David will have a funding request for Dukes County rental assistance.

Pete: Harbor Homes also.

Chair: but they have not done any paperwork; if they did they would have to open up applications to off island folk as well, according to Karen.

David: True, with regard to SHI applications; Harbor Homes is running a program, and the units are not considered permanent rentals; more one of program participants versus Leases; hence, does not meet SHI requirements; the other issue is that applying for certain kinds of funding means meeting certain stipulations; nevertheless, on this one, MVC does take care of hostile 40Bs.

Maura McGroarty: expressed concern that affordable projects in Oak Bluffs are compacted geographically and so are identifiable as project areas, identifying 'project land' inhabited by 'project folk'; ie that's where the public housing is, along with all of its connotations.

Mark Crossland: the design of the building can blend into the area.

Pete: that's one concern with the 40B in hand – it doesn't blend in.

Maura: wasn't just the geography of it – also the social aspect of it.

Chair: point taken, Maura. Chair also shared that the BOS wants to take a break from talking about housing and DMH property possibilities.

Pete: given what we have happening on the Vineyard, the only option to most working-class folk in the future might well be that of affordable housing. Pete went on to note that perhaps having worked on Southern Tier the Town might be more inclined to stay with it and not also go with the new external 40B proposal for a giant apartment building.

David: stated that he understood Maura's point and accepts the need to avoid clustering; and he would add a distinction between 'subsidized' and 'affordable'; the majority of the units we are talking about do not come with subsidies; we all agree with the need to avoid clustering.

Katie: what's the State's timing to our response?

Chair: in about 60 to 90 days the State will respond with a project eligibility letter, if approved;

Pete: so your letter will cover our discussions tonight, including the traffic issue that Mark (Crossland) brought up, as studied by the Planning Board?

Chair: I will summarize our views and send them in.

7. Member Updates

7.1 Katie: working on the nitrogen credit transfer process.

7.2 Jim: expressed his concern about the cost of affordable housing; after doing due diligence, selecting a developer and issuing the RFP, how do we ensure the maintenance of standard costs for affordable work? Mark Crossland thought that this aspect fell to both design and the Building Inspector. Jim mentioned the R111 and diminishing returns.

Pete: are you saying we should micromanage an RFP?

Jim: we need affordable pricing.

7.3 Mark Crossland: noted that Edgartown's project has not been awarded funding yet.

7.4 Pete: on the Linwood Ave situation – things are being moved out, but a bunch of stuff has also been moved about 50 feet onto our lot, making it almost into a staging area. Pete invites Jim to take a walk with him to do a quick looksee, the idea being to try to work together with Leite's to get it done as quickly and effectively as possible.

8. Short Term Rental Tax

8.1 Chair had brought this notion up at his Finance Committee presentation; his question to AHC this evening – should we pursue this, and see it through as a Warrant Article at Town Meeting?

Jim mentioned the original intent of building infrastructure; asked if Chair had spoken with Town Administrator on this.

Chair shared that he had done so but had not gotten a conclusive answer.

Pete: the BOS did not support the initial proposal on this; we need to see how much we're getting before we can decide.

Maura: funds are not evenly deposited;

Mark Crossland: we need an Article on this; start pushing it now to get it off the ground.

Chair: we'll keep talking about it and wait and see till we get to a public forum.

Pete: the funding need is still pre-eminent.

Maura: what short term rentals have done to the rental market is a no-brainer; like cause and effect; it's an easy notion to be in favor of; but the % may be debatable.

Jim: we'll get to the point where we'll have to buy properties as they come available.

Pete: we're only talking about a small amount that could be counted in annually.

Maura: like 5% of the annual Budget; no harm in AHC asking the question at a special Town Meeting.

Pete: we could ask for 10%.

Mark Crossland: agreed.

Chair said that discussion on this would continue.

9. Adjournment

Proposal to adjourn was made by Pete Bradford, seconded by Jim Bishop, with all members in favor. Chair Mark Leonard declared the meeting adjourned.

R G Eli
Secretary AHC
Town of Oak Bluffs