

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Affordable Housing Committee, Town of Oak Bluffs, held on Tue Jan 19th, 2021 at 5.00pm.

Present:

K. Mark Leonard, Chair
Peter Bradford
Jim Bishop
Katie Donahue
Mark Crossland
Garri Saganenko

In Attendance:

Ewell Hopkins
David Vigneault
Philippe Jordi
Maura McGroarty
Juliette Fay

1. Call to order

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

2. Minutes of the last Meeting

As proposed by Peter Bradford and seconded by Mark Leonard, were approved by all members present.

3. Update from Philippe Jordi, IHT

Chair called on P. Jordi to address AHC on the potential DMH development brought up by David Vigneault at the last meeting. Philippe provided a screenshare of the property location – close to the Police barracks, across from the Hospital, wooded lot of about 1.54 acres. David Vigneault of DCRHA has been working with DMH for some time. IHT has made inquiry of DMH regarding development possibilities for this property and DMH has responded positively. IHT understands that a friendly 40B approach would be workable, and DMH also would like to see inclusion of some units for their clients. IHT has begun a general assessment into development possibilities, including on-site septic work. Chair opened the floor to questions and discussion. Garri Saganenko recused himself from the discussion.

Ewell Hopkins noted that it would be prudent to have Martha's Vineyard Hospital (MVH) involved in pertinent discussions about development so that the process would be open and transparent to all stakeholders.

David Vigneault mentioned DCRHA's history of interest in this property, beginning with DMR's involvement.

Chair noted in closing that the AHC – IHT, MVH, and DMR connect presents a 'multi-function' opportunity for the Town's affordable housing work.

4. Noyes building project

Chair stated that he was still waiting on news from Town Counsel on this. Jim reported that he had spoken with Melissa Vincent about engineering work needed. Jim's conclusion is that Melissa's sense of the requirements would drive project cost up to \$100,000. In his opinion, this is not necessary as the electrical, mechanical, plumbing and alarm systems are all in. Having secured funding, all AHC needs to do is to ensure that due diligence has been observed in existing systems. David Vigneault briefly described the work ahead as a fairly elaborate redo and said that he understands Melissa's approach about being clear on functional system parameters. Chair appreciates both approaches from Melissa and Darren. AHC will just need to work through it once we get the development amendment from the Town Council.

5. Linwood Ave

Chair informed that AHC waits to hear about resolution of this situation from Town Counsel. Chair noted that when Selectman Brian Packish spoke with G. Sourati, the latter had said that he could complete survey requirements in spite of current conditions.

Pete noted that Map 21 Lot 31 (2131) had been set aside for affordable housing by our Selectmen after the Title research effort had been done, and so had not been checked on. Pete would follow up and ask Town Counsel to research its clear Title status. Pete has also asked Sourati about transferring nitrogen credits from the Columbia Ave lot (with suff. nitro credits for a 3 bedroom) to Lot 2131 which is in need. Chair asked about who keeps nitrogen credit records, and Pete informed that both the Registry of Deeds and the Board of Health would have those records.

Ewell asked about access to these properties, as far up as County Road, especially for fire and emergency services. Pete noted that the back road in that area has about 100 cars on it and that this discussion is focused on the 3 front Lots in the area, and not the 2 that have about an 80ft pile of junk metal on them. AHC's consensus is that we would like to see the paper road cleared out since it can provide access to Oxford Ave.

Ewell stressed that access is always important, and it would be helpful to the town if AHC tried to keep this aspect up front in its development of properties.

6. Prospect & Eastville development

Chair informed that Town Counsel is in the process of preparing Deeds for transfer to Habitat. He is also aware that Greg Orcutt has been working with the Habitat architect on a smaller design for the Eastville project. Habitat will most likely get the process moving on Eastville within the next few weeks.

Pete asked if there was any information to be shared about eligibility requirements with those who are expressing interest.

Jim thought that Habitat would begin on Eastville this year and start on Prospect in the next, per his conversations on this with Greg over the last week.

Mark Crossland noted that it would be to our advantage to obtain building permits for both sites, as these would then exist as projects in process and count towards our overall affordable housing building goals.

Chair believes that is how Habitat will proceed, but he will confirm the time frame with them. Being involved in income certification for Habitat, David also noted that they would probably move forward with application information within the next two weeks or so.

7. The 8 acre project

Chair stated that both he and Mark Crossland had been given to understand that technical assistance from Mass Housing would come on board at some point in Jan. However, we are still waiting for this to happen. He also noted that we have not yet decided on a name for the project and requested members to give this some thought. If we could present some options to the Board of Selectmen they could pick one and we would then have project name and identity. This would enable us to kickstart community outreach as soon as feasible on what would become a sizeable project.

8. Member Updates

Jim raised the question of whether individual units in a building were counted as a single unit for Harbor Homes and related efforts or as individual units towards the overall count of affordable housing. David confirmed that they were counted as individual units.

Garri Saganenko shared information on the 40B workshop/class that he and the Chair had attended. (please see appendix to these Minutes) He highlighted the following per the Governor's Economic Development Bill passed on Jan 14th, 2021, viz:

- i. housing Choice reduced voting majority to 50% instead of 2/3 majority.
- ii. abutter appeal reform that may require abutter to place a \$50,000 bond
- iii. new definitions on accessory dwelling units

Pete responded that it was important for AHC to look at these reforms from the perspective of Zoning By Laws. At present, a stand-alone accessory unit is not allowed in Oak Buffs, but if the language used were to be changed it could easily be facilitated.

Mark shared that the work he was involved in on the By Laws would be presented at the next Town Meeting for approval and execution.

David Vigneault commented on the West Tisbury, Chilmark, and Aquinnah experiences that DCRHA had acquired in regard to zoning. He would be happy to share such perspectives as and when appropriate.

9. Any Other Business

9.1 Katie said that she would be interested in working with the Wastewater Board. Jim noted that while he had been asked to serve on that Board nothing had actually happened since. Mark Crossland shared Erik Albert's name and told Katie he would get her a tel. number for it. Pete noted that there was a current vacancy on the Wastewater Board that would come up at the next election.

10. Adjournment

There being no other business, Chair looked to a motion to adjourn. So proposed by Jim Bishop, seconded by Peter Bradford, and agreed to by all members present. Meeting adjourned.

R George Eli
Secretary
Affordable Housing Committee
Town of Oak Bluffs