

## **Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Affordable Housing Committee, Town of Oak Bluffs, held on Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> 2021 at 5.00pm.**

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### **Present:**

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

### **Absent (apologies)**

Peter Bradford  
Mark Crossland

### **Attending:**

Greg Orcutt  
Philippe Jordi  
Maura McGroarty  
David Vigneault  
Christine Flynn

### **1.Call to order**

Chair Mark Leonard called the meeting to order at 5.07pm once a quorum was reached.

### **2.Minutes of the last meeting of Jan 19<sup>th</sup> 2021**

As proposed by Jim Bishop and seconded by Katie Donahue, were approved by all members present.

### **3. Update from the Chair**

i. The admin officer for our Noyes building grant application reached out to us to confirm certain specs; Chair has revised our Application to be more in synch with their support of soft costs versus construction costs. We hope for the best and should get results before too long.

ii. Our agreement with TRI has an expired development component – Chair asked Town Counsel if review and revision of this is possible; Town Counsel did not think so; Chair subsequently met with both Bob & Town Counsel, and the TRI agreement will be reviewed. Bob will try to get to it asap as he is beginning to be in transition. However, it looks like we're stuck with current engineering and permits, and then we'll just have to RFP for construction costs. Jim Bishop reiterated that such a scenario would bounce our costs up to a quarter million.

iii. Chair attended a meeting last week organized by the Housing Bank group. Chair noted that BOS Selectman Brian Packish was also present, so that the BOS will have a sense of the proceedings. Jim pointed out that he had not seen such efforts come up with productive results. He is particularly concerned about Bonding liabilities and the allocation of funds.

Garri Saganenko noted that the HPP mentions the Housing Bank as a goal.

Chair's response was that while he understood the mention in the HPP, we need to be involved in the process and provide feedback and suggestions on how such an effort could best be organized and executed. AHC Chair will keep BOS Chair J Balboni apprised of AHC views on these proceedings. If we get it right, perhaps it can be shaped usefully.

Maura noted similar concerns to Jim on the Housing Bank.

Jim also referenced Katie Donahue's power point presentation on the AHC Menu and Chair asked if Katie would consider a presentation at her earliest convenience, which Katie agreed to.

#### **4. DMH at Eastville**

Chair informed that no meeting had thus far been scheduled over a possible long-term lease with IHT. Philippe had not heard of any new development either. But Philippe noted that DMH would need to set its conditions, and then IHT would follow through.

Jim expressed support for the project.

Chair reiterated DMH's desire to see 20% of project use set aside for its clients. Chair will keep AHC apprised as this effort begins to move forward.

#### **5. Lagoon Ridge Subdivision**

Chair had sent a copy of the developer's proposed amendment to the special permit filed with the Planning Board, to all members. There will be a public hearing on this project Feb 11<sup>th</sup>. Cape Builders, developer, intends a duplex with 4 affordable housing units, the 4<sup>th</sup> set aside for the 55+ group. A 2 Lot two duplex effort, it will also involve a smaller cottage style design.

Jim noted the small size of the Lots involved and the hilly location.

Greg Orcutt recalled that at one point, Ewell of the OB Planning Board had mentioned Habitat involvement in such a project. Greg had heard nothing since. No one else present knew about such a possibility.

David Vigneault noted the focus was on Units, not Lots. And whoever got it, Habitat or DCRHA, it would go towards a real need, anyways.

Chair raised the possibility of AHC endorsing the project.

Jim said AHC should wait until we had seen final plan information and proposals.

David suggested that AHC could support the notion of the project, without stating support for specific development plans yet to be formulated.

Philippe noted that year-round rentals were most desirable and met the needs of local year-round residents, as opposed to summer rentals.

Jim noted that wastewater flow issues would be difficult to manage if there was no year-round continuity. A fixed % of flow is always needed to ensure a system will function efficiently.

Chair noted the importance of Jim's point, but also queried the possibilities of how flow may be adequately sustained.

#### **6. MVC Housing Needs Assessment**

Chair noted that year-round occupancy dropped to 38%, voter registration increased by 22%, and the median house price increased by a million dollars! More people, fewer homes, and prices are going up! Just makes AHC's work that much more critical.

Chair has been thinking about outreach, along the lines of a "Do you know?" blurb in the local papers. Comments?

Jim expressed total agreement, in favor of social media. Jim has consistently heard rants and complaints about the lack of housing and acknowledged that we crossed the tipping point on Affordable Housing some time back, but that here also seems to be a far greater lack of involvement. If we could get stuff out along the lines of polling, outreach, explanation and projection, it would be great.

Chair mentioned a recent instance in which someone had posted a complaint on Facebook about Oak Bluffs town not doing much for Affordable Housing work and wanting to raise this issue with the BOS. He had responded to the complainant, who decided that since effort was being made there was no need to attend a BOS Meeting. Chair's conclusion – we need a community support network! Going forward, it would be critical for AHC to develop a core network of affordable housing advocates who have a good understanding of what AHC is working on and who would be active in sharing such information. Christine Flynn noted that David Vigneault had shared a housing opportunity at a MVC Needs Assessment session, and this had resulted in some 280 hits. She agreed with Jim that we are indeed past the tipping point for Affordable Housing on the Vineyard. The MVC Needs Assessment focuses on critical issues, as with multi-family housing, water quality issues, municipal plans – issues that are costly and complex, and on which there are no easy answers. She thanked the Chair for the opportunity to share MVC's perspective on these challenges

Phillippe shared that on recent home ownership lottery offerings, there had been 40 applications received and about 150 inquiries in the process.

David noted that good credit is a prerequisite; to the general point though, he noted that in the marketing phase, responses have consistently been good, per the experience of DCRHA. He also pointed out that the 700 odd homes sold on the Vineyard last year were all sold within a specific time frame. indicating a doubling of sales in that period. He thinks that OB is doing a good job of addressing the Affordable Housing situation and is heartened by all that he is seeing at AHC. The lack of political will is not an issue for the voters. But there is too much talk and not enough units.

## **7. MVC Cottage Style Development**

The meeting for this was held last Friday, with a Planner from Dennis, MA and the contractor from the Lagoon Ridge subdivision. Homes are 900 – 1300 square feet, modular. Chair will send project slides to all members once available.

## **8. Closing Comments**

i. further discussion on outreach was held. Chair asked if Katie or Garri might come up with a social media outreach plan, and Katie said she would. She will get the PowerPoint Menu for AHC sent to members prior to our next meeting.

ii. David Vigneault mentioned the email he had sent out on COVID Winter Rental Relief. This will cover ½ the rent for participating Landlords. Please share this information. DCRHA has better support now and are trying to maximize help for those in need. In publicizing their work, DCRHA has built up a Homebuyer Clearing House listing of some 400 households to which project information could be disseminated. Chair noted that per info he had noted in passing, some 1600 families are behind in their rent, and 112 are close to being evicted.

## **9. Adjournment**

There being no other business, on a proposal from Jim Bishop, seconded by Katie Donahue and approved of by all members present, Chair Mark Leonard declared the meeting adjourned.

R George Eli  
Secretary  
Affordable Housing Committee  
Town of Oak Bluffs