

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Affordable Housing Committee, Town of Oak Bluffs, held on Tue Mar 16th 2021 at 5 pm.

Present:

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

Absent:

Peter Bradford

Attending

Maura McGroarty

1. Call to order

Chair Mark Leonard called the meeting to order at 5pm.

2. Minutes of Mar 2nd 2021

Were approved, as proposed by Jim Bishop, seconded by Katie Donahue, and agreed to by all members present.

3. Southern Tier Housing Community Meeting feedback

Mark Crossland: all in all, a good meeting; would be nice to have more participation.

Jim: will keep pushing the info on it; looks like we have interest now, just need momentum into next meeting.

Chair: noted 44 signups for the meeting; a few abutters also; noted some pushback on the webinar format – needs to be improved so that there is more interaction between floor and presenters, with chats, Q & A, comments at the end; but overall, mostly positive. next webinar set for Apr 8th 2021, preceded by flyer, announcements.

4. Facebook page update

Katie reported that the AHC Facebook page is ready to go, now needs Bob's approval so it can go live.

Chair has copied Wendy on this so she can follow up as needed with no delays in the process. Once live, we will be able to start accumulating followers.

5. Linwood Ave update

Chair has sorted out several mixed messages about what Sourati could or could not do, what Town Counsel was working/not working on, and what solution Selectman Packish was working informally with John Leite towards; the bottom line is that nothing is happening and it looks like nothing will. Chair had followed up with Selectman Packish, but the response received was that AHC had work to be done before it could move on the properties currently encroached upon by Mr. Leite. In conversation with current Selectman Chair Jason Balboni, Chair was given the impression that the Town would not get into

any dimension of legality with John Leite's encroachment at this time. Rather, it would be best to get all of the AHC issues on the plate cleared before addressing the encroachment issue.

As such, Chair has noted the issues that need to be resolved and we will resolve them asap. Chair has already emailed Peter about Lot 2131's Title issues; once cleared, we will pursue a perc test.

b. Committee members then broached possible solutions and shared comments on the issue;

i. Jim felt that the Town does not want to spend money on litigation; Leite has no legal right to extend his business's borders and use Town property in the process. Perhaps we could get the DEP and the EPA involved, since there are tires there that constitute a hazardous waste issue. But Jim also noted that AHC is an advisory committee with specific limits. The Town's Building Inspector could deal with this. But it looks like only a neighbor's complaint to the EPS might get things moving.

ii. Maura noted that this situation has been allowed for decades, much less years.

iii. Mark Crossland raised questions over the exact requirements and process for getting the EPA involved. Jim said a complaint would do it, but AHC could not be the filer. Mark then extended the idea into getting it on the Agenda before the Board of Selectmen at a public meeting and making the case for a complaint to be filed because no action had been taken.

iv. Garri reiterated Mark Crossland's comments about getting the issue before the Board of Selectmen. Garri also noted that AHC's mission requires it to bring up the issue to its approving authority, and that this could be done once the outstanding pre-development property needs were taken care of. Garri was also asked by Jim if he would consider researching Leite's encroachment actions; Chair noted that research should focus on specific violations - eg EPA regs, BOH regs, that would identify non-compliance and/or violation. Garri agreed to checking on this.

v. Katie noted that research, referring to the authorities and its outcomes, would all affect the timeline to property development; for eg, if there needed to be environmental testing done to ascertain the degree of cumulative environmental damage, setting it in motion from start to end would take time. All the more essential we move forward on this.

6. Member Updates

Chair: Habitat for Humanity's property Deed transfers should go through this week; on Agenda items, please get these to the Chair by the Wednesday of the week preceding our meeting. Chair sets the Agenda on Thursdays and the Notice of Meeting gets posted on Fridays.

Katie: will let members know once the Facebook page goes live!

Jim: on the State Veteran's Group seeking a property at Jessica Lane – they are putting together a Board of Governors soon; the Town will need to spend very little on this.

Garri: Anyone in need of COVID-19 Winter Rental Housing Relief can be directed to Garri, who will help out with the needed forms etc.

7. Adjournment

There being no other updates or issues for the time being, Chair looked to a motion to adjourn. So proposed by Mark Crossland and seconded by Katie Donahue, and approved of by all members present. Chair declared the meeting adjourned.

R George Eli
Secretary
Affordable Housing Committee
Town of Oak Bluffs