

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Affordable Housing Committee, Town of Oak Bluffs, held on Apr 6th 2021 at 5pm.

Present:

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

Absent:

Mark Crossland

In Attendance:

Greg Orcutt
Maura McGroarty
Christine Flynn

1. Call to order

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

2. Minutes of the meeting of Mar 16th 2021

Were proposed for acceptance by Jim Bishop, seconded by Garri Saganenko, and approved by all members present.

3. Updates from the Chair, AHC

Chair has met with Wendy Brough, Ag. Town Administrator, and reviewed AHC items, going forward, that need action.

b. the Habitat Deed transfer did not happen; Chair has sent a request for an update to Michael Goldsmith this morning.

c. AHC's Grant Application has been successful! The sum of \$97,000.00 has been awarded to us for work on the Noyes Building project; an initial press release was noted in the MV Times and Chair has since spoken with Brian Dowd of MV Times, there should be further mention going forward;

On finalizing the Noyes agreement with TRI: Chair will review this once more and then it will go to the BOS next Tuesday for approval; TRI will then proceed with modifications; while the Town is responsible, TRI will execute as planned and we will pay their management fee for oversight of design and construction. Jim noted his objections once more towards the extra costs that will be incurred per the Town's management of this process. Chair was in agreement. Garri asked about background information to the situation and chair explained same - essentially, the BOS wants the Town to be responsible for the project, which means payment at prevailing rates that will drive up the cost, as opposed to having TRI run it entirely as a co-mortgagee.

d. We have another Grant possibility, this one from the Rural and Small-Town Development Fund Capital Grant Program; Chair has met with Alice Boyd, who writes the Grant for the Oak Bluffs Annual Community Block Grant program; the max awardable is \$400,000.00; application is due in June and decisions will be made in September.

e. Greg Orcutt, in response to a question from Pete, said that Habitat is committed to getting work started as soon as possible. Greg noted a little frustration with 'plans drawn and plans misplaced' on the

design of the project, which is causing a little delay. Nevertheless, this pertains to the Prospect Ave property, and Habitat intends starting off at Eastville as soon as possible, forthcoming design plans notwithstanding.

f. Chairman reminded all that the next Southern Tier Webinar/Zoom Meeting would be held on Apr 14th. Notice should be forthcoming. Chair will send copy out once he gets it; main focus will be on critical portions of the RFP, objectives and evaluation criteria. They have been working on improving the format so we hope it will go over better this time with improved accessibility for participants with comments and questions shared at the end of the meeting.

4, MVHB Discussion

Chair noted that the Housing Bank Committee could not make it tonight, and their presentation has been moved to our next meeting on Apr 20th; meanwhile, we can share our opinions, comments and questions; these are presented per individual response:

Jim: had 3 main questions:

1. Would the Housing Bank actively support large scale Developers ie like the project now at 5 corners?
2. Will the Housing Bank look to Bonding in order to secure funding?
3. Will the Housing Bank use its funds for Affordable Housing specifically, and not in addition to other projects?

Jim noted the Land Bank has had problems because of Bonding issues; projects have become affordability issues, with no help to the 'little guy'; we Bond in order to raise the funds needed to purchase property; the Bond created becomes part of the debt load of the Land Bank, and the Town gets locked in; intent to leave the arrangement results in having to take over the Bond liability; and if the Town cannot do this, then the shortfall comes out of the Town's tax base.

Chair: noted that low income was mentioned as at 80%, but there was also further mention of 175-200% of AMI.

Pete: Noted then that we cannot get out of the Land Bank due to the Bonding issue. But at some point, enough property will have been appropriated. On the positive side, it has always been onerous to call on each Town individually when it comes to regional projects, and this way we won't have to; Pete also raised a question about transfer tax costs and what specifically applied and when.

Chair: indicated that there was a State-wide transfer fee of up to 2%, but per the language used, municipalities can set this, and it could be anywhere from 2% to zero. Housing Bank is talking of up to 2%. Pete's further Q – would this be from the buyer or the seller? Legislation indicates it's from the buyer i.e. the purchaser has the liability. Everything 2 million and below is exempt, per current legislation.

Maura: Oak Bluffs voters want to get out of the Land Bank: for the upcoming town meeting, the warrant article has been processed, and the language supports getting out of the Land Bank and nothing else; Maura also referred to the Center for Living set up some five years ago, which was structured to allow the Towns to exit without any obligation to buy the building; much depends, then, on the structure

created. As is, Oak Bluff's tax rates are even higher than Chilmark's, and the question of the tax base continues to be pertinent.

General comments arising out of the discussion:

i. Garri: With all of the issues, comments and questions raised, can we get them together for the upcoming meeting to be responded to? Chair responded that if members get Qs to him by next Wednesday, he will collate, consolidate and forward same to the Land Bank committee for their responses.

ii. Question raised by Garri in relation to CPC expenditure and process. Jim, as a CPC member, responded that CPC's concerns are specific to the Town of Oak Bluffs. CPC's mandate is to spend 25% of its annual funding on Affordable Housing; There is neither program nor process for external concerns. For example, because IEH is an Oak Bluffs Affordable Housing concern, if they need help IEH can always come back to the CPC.

In wrapping up, Chair noted that the language to be adopted is critical. While it need not be too broad, it must be sufficiently specific to support AHC's needs.

5. Veteran's Housing

Jim said that the Veterans have yet to meet, so there is no update. The current notion is to use the Jessica Lane lot, with a Title V placement and then figure out how much can be done per working with the Town on the desired objectives. Pete noted that the Jessica Lane lot has not been set aside for Affordable Housing. The Title will need to be good, and they will need to work with the Town on it. Chair will check on this and the Linwood Ave status with Wendy.

6. Member Updates

Garri: has called the State DEP, asked about hazard violations etc and is currently waiting on a DEP response; will also call the BOH on illegal extensions at a work site; Pete suggested checking with B. Packish;

Chair reiterated what Selectman Packish had shared with him in their last conversation about what the BOS needs AHC to do before it will move on the Leite issue, viz:

- i. Clear the 2131 Title
- ii. Get G. Sourati working on a septic plan with a time frame to it
- iii. Subdivide 2131 to create 3 separate Lots
- iv. Work with the OB Planning Board on a septic design for each Lot
- v. complete and issue the RFP

Garri intends to do a site visit at Linwood. Pete and Jim said they would go with him. Garri also raised the issue of a specific Charter for AHC that sets out duty and limits. Chair responded that we have a draft from Town Admin that we never discussed nor voted on; he will forward this to all for consideration and subsequent adoption.

Katie: confirms that the AHC FB page is ready, but is still waiting on permission to go from Town Admin.

Pete: asked whether Harbor Homes had secured the New York Ave property. Jim confirmed this, stating also that the number of units that the project will furnish will be 5. IEH's Aidylberg project will add another 5.

Christine: had sent an AMI info chart to the Chair earlier in the day; Chair will forward same stat.

Chair: informed the meeting that the latest word on the Habitat transfers, just received, is that the draft document will be delivered tomorrow. AHC's Town page still needs resolution, and the Chair will work it out with IT with asst from the Secretary as needed.

7. Adjournment

There being no other business, Chair looked to a motion to adjourn. So proposed by Jim Bishop, seconded by Pete Bradford, and approved by all members present. Chair Mark Leonard declared the meeting adjourned.

R George Eli
Secretary
Affordable Housing Committee
Town of Oak Bluffs