

Affordable Housing Trust
December 2, 2021
Meeting held via Zoom videoconference

Roll Call

Present were:

Victoria Petracca, Chair
Frank Streeter, Secretary
Jay Moody
Carolyn Read
Debra Williams
Marilyn Largey, ex officio

Chair Victoria Petracca called the Affordable Housing Trust's (AHT) meeting to order over Zoom at 7:03 PM and called the roll of the Trustees.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

After a brief discussion,

Trustee Read moved to accept the minutes of the Trust's November 4, 2021 and November 18, 2021 meetings; Trustee Williams seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

Monitoring of Lancaster's Existing Affordable Housing Inventory

Trustee Read updated the Board on the status of 32 Carter St. Trustee Read approached the homeowner who does not seem to have an issue with signing the updated version of the deed rider, which would allow 32 Carter St. to be formally added to Lancaster's affordable housing inventory.

Chair Petracca briefed the Board on the Harbor Homes project now being built at 2038 Lunenburg Road. She has not had an update from the developer in about a month. Lancaster Resident Martha Moore commented that the development is paused until Spring due to stormwater management issues. Apparently their existing retention ponds will have to be redone, which will cause a major delay. The Board authorized Chair Petracca to send a letter to the Planning Board reminding them about the development's requirement to include affordable units and requesting to be kept informed about the development's progress.

Chair Petracca briefed the Board on the former Jones Crossing development. She was pleased to report that the ZBA had approved the requested transfer of the Comprehensive Permit, although with the caveat that the approval is contingent on the ZBA not receiving any negative comments from Town Counsel, whose report has been delayed. The project has not been renamed yet and so is still referred to as Jones Crossing.

The comprehensive permit was transferred “as is” and now it’s been successfully transferred the developer plans to ask for some changes to it at the ZBA’s January meeting, or at least in Q1. The Board of Health has not yet ruled on the septic systems.

Scheduled Appearances

None

Continued Discussion of 40R Zoning in North Lancaster

Chair Petracca updated the Board on the Select Board’s upcoming hearing on December 6th. Karen Chapman of MRPC will attend the meeting and will have some slides to show. The Board agreed that Chair Petracca should work with Ms. Chapman to develop the slides and a presentation to the SB.

Secretary Streeter asked about opportunities to modify the text of the article going forward. Chair Petracca said that the Select Board has the power to change the text at its hearing. After the Select Board hearing DHCD could also give a conditional preliminary eligibility that includes their changes. However, while the Planning Board must hold a hearing on the measure before Town Meeting, it cannot change the wording. Of course at Town Meeting any article can be amended from the floor if the voters approve.

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Capital Group

Chair Petracca said she had reached out to Town Counsel about this but had not received a response. The Board discussed scheduling future AHT meetings about drafting the MOA. Several Trustees had conflicts with the upcoming December 16 meeting date. Especially given that there is no draft MOA to review the sense of the Board was not to meet on the 16th and wait until the Trust’s January meeting. Trustee Moody will reach out to Town Counsel (KP Law) to try to get their MOA comments ASAP and will distribute them to the Board as soon as he receives them.

The NRWA has asked Chair Petracca to brief the Wild & Scenic Rivers Leadership Counsel about the proposed 40R zone. Chair Petracca wants to clearly identify any proposed conservation land by McGovern Brook so it can be formally conserved as a part of the MOA. She will ask the NRWA for assistance in this. However she will limit her presentation to the 40R zone and will not be covering the rest of CG’s proposed development.

Chair Petracca reported that she appeared at CG’s forum at MRE on December 1 to answer questions about the proposed 40R zone.

Secretary Streeter briefly updated the Board on the work of the Memorial School Reuse Committee and the deed restrictions covering all of the Town’s land around the Town Green. In sum, the deed restrictions on the former school that would have to be lifted to convert it for affordable housing require both an act of the Legislature and permission from the National Park Service, as well as some sort of land swap agreement.

CHAPA Municipal Engagement Initiative Application Update

The Trust recently applied for the Municipal Engagement Initiative, and Chair Petracca followed up with CHAPA about the application. CHAPA reported that Lancaster's application is competitive, but they are swamped with work right now. However CHAPA is willing to provide technical assistance to the Trust if/as needed.

Public Comment

Lancaster resident Eric Malkowski (158 Devonshire Rd.) complimented Chair Petracca about her presentation at the 12/1 forum. Chair Petracca noted that there were about 40 people at CG's presentation. About 40 minutes was spent discussing the rezoning of the back land, subsequent to which CG and Chair Petracca made a presentation on the 40R zone. Discussion of the MOA was tabled until a future forum.

New Business

Trustee Moody reported that the Town's new Building Inspector is "doing a great job." He reminded the Board that the Town's new Planning Director starts in January.

Chair Petracca brought up the funds available from ARPA and how they could be applied to housing. The Board discussed the Town's needs and various options for meeting them.

Communications

Chair Petracca noted the Select Board had forwarded the Trust a copy of a cease and desist letter Capital Group had sent to Planning Board Chair Russ Williston that referenced matters related to the Trust.

Chair Petracca reminded the Board of the dates of CG's upcoming presentations, all of which will now be held on Zoom instead of at MRE.

The next two scheduled Affordable Housing Trust Meetings will be held on Thursday, January 6, 2022 at 7 P.M. via Zoom, and on Thursday, January 20, 2022 at 7 P.M. via Zoom.

Adjournment

There being no further business to consider,

Secretary Streeter moved to adjourn the meeting; Trustee Read seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:11 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Frank S. Streeter, Secretary