

Affordable Housing Trust
September 7, 2023
Meeting held via Zoom videoconference



Roll Call

Present were:

Victoria Petracca, Chair
Frank Streeter, Secretary
Jason Allison
Carolyn Read
Debra Williams
Kelly Dolan, ex officio (absent)

Chair Petracca called the Affordable Housing Trust's meeting to order over Zoom at 7:04 PM and called the roll of the Trustees.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

After reviewing the minutes from the Trust's May 4, June 1 and July 6, 2023 meetings,

Trustee Read moved to accept all three sets of minutes; Trustee Williams seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

Scheduled Appearances

None

Updates to Lancaster's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI)

Chair Petracca noted that the Town's new SHI numbers based on the 2020 census had been released and that Lancaster's 138 deed-restricted affordable units represent only 5.04% of the Town's housing stock. Another 136 SHI units would need to be built and certified to get the Town over the State's 10% threshold and another 192 units would be needed to hit the 12% level to have a buffer above the 10% minimum.

Housing Production Plan

Chair Petracca reported that there would be no announcement about the grant that the Town had requested to fund the new Housing Production Plan (HPP) until at least October. This is delayed from the previous schedule and concerned the Board in terms of getting the HPP done before March 2024 for when the current HPP expires. Town Administrator Kate Hodges will not sign the contract for the consultant for the HPP without a funding commitment, which is not unreasonable.

197 Main St. (previously 213-219 South Main St.)

The Board reviewed the information on the project's Local Action Unit (LAU), which will be Unit #4, a one bedroom unit on the ground floor. Unlike some other units in this project, this one meets the State's minimum size requirement for a LAU, and the application has been approved by the State. The regulatory agreement should be finalized next and requires a signature from the applicant, the project's lender, and then one from

Town Administrator Hodges. That should be completed in the next couple of weeks and once signed needs to be recorded at the Registry of Deeds. Once it has been recorded the form goes to the State and they will add the unit to the Town's SHI. Chair Petracca also noted that the correct address of the property is 197 South Main St., not 213-219 South Main St. as had been used before.

40R Zoning

Chair Petracca updated the Board on the status of the Attorney General's approval of the 40R zoning bylaw that the Town passed last year. The Attorney General's approval is now due by September 18. Chair Petracca commented on litigation potentially delaying this development.

Cottage Lane rentals

Construction is in progress on MCO's Cottage Lane 32 rental unit development of Deershorn Road and siding is up on some of the houses. Chair Petracca says it looks great and encouraged other Board members to go and visit and take a look for themselves. She submitted the project's SHI application to Mass Housing. However, Mass Housing is delaying its final approval due to project financing delays. Once this is resolved, the 32 units will then go onto the Town's SHI.

Neck Farm Estates 40B

Chair Petracca gave a brief update on Neck Farm Estates, which is the 40 B project proposed for 13 Neck Rd. in the center of Lancaster. The project has received its project eligibility letter from the State and can now apply for a comprehensive permit from the Lancaster ZBA. She noted that once the Town receives this application there is a very tight timeline for holding the requisite hearings.

DCAMM project

There were no updates on the DCAMM property. Trustee Allison noted that the Town is waiting for a response to its request for proposals for a consultant for a feasibility study of the site. The Town did receive a grant to pay for this consultant, which is a good start. Trustee Williams will look for a copy of the RFP to see what the scope of work is. Chair Petracca will write a letter to the Select Board advocating for the creation of some affordable units at the 30% AMI level rather than 60 or 80%.

Harbor Homes

Finance Committee Member and Lancaster resident Dick Trussell of 15 Burbank Lane asked for an update on the Harbor Homes project at 2038 Lunenburg Road. Secretary Streeter, who is also Chair of the Planning Board, said there was no particular update as the developer had asked the Planning Board for a lifting of the cease and desist order for the site but then withdrew the request.

Blue Heron

Chair Petracca was pleased to announce that the affordable unit at Blue Heron had finally sold and the sale closed on August 9 to an eligible buyer.

Proposed Updates to Zoning

Chair Petracca reminded the Board that the Board's proposed revisions to the Accessory Dwelling Unit bylaw are on the Warrant for the Town's Special Town Meeting on September 18. She thanked Trustee Read for pushing this forward and acknowledged it had been a long process. Chair Petracca encouraged all members of the public to go to the Special Town Meeting and both verbally support and vote for this zoning article. The Trust encouraged Chair Petracca to represent its position and support of the article at the meeting.

Public Comment

none

New Business

None

Communications

None

The next regularly scheduled meetings of the Affordable Housing Trust will be held on Thursday, October 5, 2023 and on Thursday, November 2, 2023, both at 7 P.M. via Zoom.

Adjournment

There being no further business to consider,

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Frank S. Streeter, Secretary