

Affordable Housing Trust

Meeting Minutes of April 29, 2024 9:30 am

Hybrid meeting on Zoom and attended in-person in Ellen Stone room, Cary Hall

Affordable Housing Trust Board Members present: Elaine Tung, Chair; Linda Prosnitz, William Erickson, Tiffany Payne

Absent: Mark Sandeen

Staff present: Carol Kowalski, Assistant Town Manager for Development; Liz Rust, RHSO Director; Ragi Ramachandran, Administrative Assistant; Attorney Jillian Barger, Town Counsel

Other attendees: Bob Pressman, Jay Luker

Ms. Tung chaired the hybrid meeting and called the meeting to order at 9:34 am.

1. Chair, Select Board, Board/Committee Liaison and RHSO/staff report

The Trustees reviewed and agreed to increase funding to purchase a laptop for one the Trust members. The Trustees had voted on Nov. 30 2023 to approve funding up to \$750 for this expense. Ms. Payne was recused from this discussion.

Ms. Tung requested a motion to approve up to \$1200 from Affordable Housing Trust funds for purchasing a laptop for a Trustee for use for Affordable Housing Trust business. Ms. Prosnitz moved. Mr. Erickson seconded. The Trustees voted in favor of the motion 3-0-0, by a roll call vote (Tung – yes, Erickson – yes, Prosnitz – yes).

Ms. Rust shared that the next Housing Needs Assessment meeting is scheduled for June 12.

There was discussion on whether to apply for One Stop for Growth grant or not. Ms. Tung asked if they should apply for the grant to be used towards developing a Housing Production Plan. Ms. Kowalski and Ms. Rust advised that since a Housing needs Assessment is being pursued, it would be a duplicate effort to create a Housing Production Plan. Ms. Rust added that the Trust could achieve their intentions from a Housing Production Plan in the Housing Needs Assessment. The Housing Needs Assessment had further flexibility since it is not dictated by regulation.

Mr. Pressman suggested that the Housing Needs Assessment focus on different segments of the population, and identify the different groups for which affordable housing is needed.

2. LexHAB Purchase

The Trustees reviewed the Grant Agreement for the property being purchased by LexHAB. Town Counsel addressed the Trustees questions. Ms. Rust explained the LIP agreement process. Attorney Barger clarified that there will be a perpetual restriction for one unit on the SHI. The Trustees discussed the driveway encroachment identified by the Town engineer. Attorney Barger will follow up with LexHAB's counsel.

3. MBTA/SRD Buydown

There was discussion on the MBTA buy-downs, the potential for adding another unit by buying it down from the market to affordable, or providing a deeper subsidy to make units affordable to lower income households, for instance to households earning 50-60% of the median income. The

Trustees also reviewed buying down a market rate unit with more bedrooms to make the unit an affordable unit.

Ms. Kowalski briefly explained waiving the permit fees or some portion of it, to a builder to go towards an affordable unit. Ms. Kowalski will be presenting this to the Select Board at the meeting on May 13, during the MBTA buy-down agenda item.

A working group comprising of Ms. Prosnitz, Ms. Kowalski and Ms. Rust will work on exploring the ideas further. The buy-down discussion will continue in the next meeting.

Jay Luker asked about MBTA buy-downs. Ms. Prosnitz explained the concept of buy-downs, and clarified that a buy-down does not duplicate inclusionary housing requirements. Mr. Erickson added that the Affordable Housing Trust is not subsidizing anything that is required under Lexington zoning bylaws for a developer building in Town.

4. Parcel 68-44 Update

There was a brief discussion of the RFP timeline.

There was also discussion on concerns raised by Jeff Howry at the Conservation Commission regarding ground water level in parcel 68-44. Mr. Erickson had explained it to Mr. Howry. Mr. Erickson further detailed the ground water table readings for everyone's understanding and reiterated that there were no concerns.

Ms. Tung requested a motion to go into Executive session under Exemption 6 to discuss the value of Parcel 68-44. The Chair stated that an open session might have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the town. Ms. Prosnitz moved. Mr. Erickson seconded. The Trustees voted in favor of the motion 4-0-0, by a roll call vote (Erickson – yes, Prosnitz – yes, Tung – yes, Payne – yes).

Ms. Tung stated that the meeting will adjourn at the end of the Executive session and the Trust will not be reconvening in the regular session.

List of documents reviewed:

Affordable Housing Trust Buy Down program