

Westport Affordable Housing Trust Virtual Meeting of Jan. 31, 2024

Zoom Meeting Participants: Chair Jim Sabra (JS); Craig Dutra (CD), Vice Chair Henry Lanier (HL); Ann Boxler (AB); BettyAnn Mullins (BM); Teri Bernert (TB), consultant Leonardi Aray; and Interim Housing Specialist Robert Barboza.

1. Call to Order

The virtual meeting was called to order by the Chair at 4:31 p.m. with JS, CD, HL, AB, and BM participating via computer link or telephone link. BM joined the meeting at 4:33 p.m. and TB joined the meeting at 4:35 p.m. The Chair read the notice of Open Meeting Law provisions governing remote meetings, and notice of recording, and the meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Minutes: Nov. 29, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes.

The minutes were reviewed by members, with no questions or comments.

MOTION by HL to approve the minutes of the Nov. 29, 2023 meeting as presented. Second by CD. The motion passed on a 4-0 roll call vote: HL aye; CD aye; AB aye; JS aye.

3. Meeting Schedule

It was noted that the next virtual meetings would be scheduled for 4:30 p.m. on Feb. 28 and March 27, 2024. The Chair expects to be absent on Feb. 28, so Mr. Lanier is designated to run the meeting.

4. Financial Report/Invoices/Office Matters

Mr. Barboza reviewed the financial report dated 1/24/24 showing current expenses and remaining balances. The Chair asked for ratification of a voucher dated 12/20/23 for \$1,090.00 for Robert Barboza, professional services; a voucher dated 1/3/24 for Leonardi Aray Associates for \$1,820.00 for consulting services; and a \$19,500 voucher for Keane Construction for CRE-HAB #2201 project services.

MOTION by CD to ratify and approve payment of the vouchers listed from Robert Barboza, LAA, and Keane Construction for services rendered. Second by BM. The motion passed on a 6-0 roll call vote: HL aye; CD aye; AB aye; BM aye; JS aye; TB aye.

HAO Report: Mr. Barboza's report noted that the recommended CPA grant article will be on the annual town meeting warrant this spring. The Trust's annual report for the Westport Annual Report of all departments to the town meeting was submitted. The CPA funding application, information on Affordable Homes Act programs, and a report on the Jan. 24 Infrastructure Oversight Committee public meeting on Rt. 6 water and sewer line project were also included in the meeting package.

5. LAA – Site visits, land search, program updates.

Mr. Aray reported the completion of the CRE-HAB #2201 project, repairs and updates to a HOPP program home. He noted that a second CRE-HAB project is about to get underway. He presented a screen shot showing steps to be taken in a formal land acquisition process, including public advertising, minimum site requirements, etc. and a sample solicitation for letters of interest from landowners. The basic requirement would be to seek sufficient land for a mid-size development of 30 or more housing units. There was general agreement that the land procurement process should continue, with Mr. Aray tasked with developing evaluation criteria and weight values for proposals.

6. Community Preservation Committee update

Betty Slade, participating in the meeting, was introduced as the Community Preservation Committee liaison to the Trust. She inquired whether the Trust would be seeking an audit of spending for the past year, as it usually does. The Chair said an inquiry to the audit firm would be made.

7. BBAHFH – Request for Additional Funding

Christine LaCourse, executive director for the Buzzards Bay Area Habitat for Humanity, invited Trust members to tour the nearly-completed duplex homes on Sodom Road. She noted that the project was initiated three years ago with acceptance of the BBAHFH proposal. Unfortunately, pandemic conditions caused a huge rise in construction material costs and labor, resulting in a substantial overrun of the original budget. With projected total costs approaching \$700,000, the BBAHFH is facing a \$165,000 shortfall in project funding, she indicated. She asked that the Trust consider supplementing its original \$195,000 grant for the project with some additional funding. Mr. Lanier asked if local banks had been asked to contribute to the shortfall, and was told they have been solicited for aid. Ms. LaCourse noted that \$45,000 was raised by a recent fundraiser. Mr. Aray suggested that BBAHFH has been a great partner, and that he could offer a recommendation on additional funding once he had reviewed the project costs reports. Mr. Sabra said the Trust would review its budget and consider the request at a future meeting. Ms. LaCourse said she would provide the updated construction budget report to the Trust, and send a memo for potential tour dates for the Sodom Road site.

8. New Business

The Chair suggested that potential executive sessions be posted for all future meetings, so members may have confidential discussions of potential real estate purchases. There were no objections voiced.

MOTION by CD to adjourn the meeting at 5:28 p.m. Seconded by BM. The motion passed on a 6-0 roll call vote: AB aye; CD aye; HL aye; TB aye; BM aye; JS aye.

Approved Date: 2/28/24