

Westport Affordable Housing Trust Virtual Meeting of Feb. 23, 2022

Members Participating: Chair Liz Collins (LC), Henry Lanier (HL), David West (DW), Ann Boxler (AB), Betty-Ann Mullins (BM), Craig Dutra (CD), James Sabra (JS). Also present: Housing Specialist Leonardi Aray (LA), recording clerk Robert Barboza.

1. Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m. by the Chair with the above members participating. The Chair announced that the meeting was being recorded, and was meeting remotely in accordance with the Governor's order allowing for such meetings. The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Minutes: HL made a motion to accept the minutes of the Jan. 26, 2022 meeting as submitted. Seconded by BM. The motion passed on a 6-0-1 roll call vote: HL aye; CD aye; AB aye; BM aye; DW aye; LC aye; with JS abstaining as he was not present at that meeting.

3. Meeting Schedule: The Chair indicated that upcoming meetings are planned for 4 p.m. on March 23, April 27, and May 25, 2022.

4. Financial Report/Invoices: LA reviewed the financial report dated Feb. 21, 2022, and current invoices totaling \$3077.00. JS made a motion to approve the financial report as presented, including approval of the 2-23-22 voucher for staff invoices from Robert Barboza for \$627.00 and for Leonardi Aray Associates for \$2,450.00. Seconded by AB, the motion passed on a 7-0 roll call vote: HL aye; CD aye; AB aye; BM aye; DW aye; LC aye; JS aye.

5. BBAHFH Update: LA reported that the duplex project on Sodom Road site is progressing well, and shared photos of recent site work.

6. HAO Report: LA asked the Trust to discuss the process for hiring a new Housing Specialist, or hiring professional support to handle some of those duties. The Chair indicated she was not aware that this item would be on the agenda, and was not prepared to discuss the matter. CD made a motion to table the discussion until the next meeting. Seconded by JS, the motion passed on a 7-0 roll call vote: HL aye; CD aye; AB aye; BM aye; DW aye; JS aye; LC aye.

1. MODERATE INCOME HOPP: LA reviewed the proposed guidelines for a moderate income HOPP program, noting that local preferences could be applied to homebuyer applications, but the homes would not count as affordable homes on the town's Subsidized Housing Index (SHI) because of the higher income limits. He also reviewed the different options for repayment requirements or grants/forgiveable loans. DW asked for more details on repayment options; JS suggested that housing opportunities counting for the SHI should be a priority for the Trust; BM asked for the town's current SHI data, and was told the percentage of affordable housing stands at about 3.6 percent of total housing. The Chair felt there is too much need for housing at the lower end of the income scale to divert funds for purchases by moderate income homebuyers. DW made a motion not to approve the moderate income HOPP program, and to allow future reconsideration only with a majority vote of the Trust. The motion was seconded by JS, and passed on a 7-0 roll call vote: HL aye; CD aye; AB aye; BM aye; DW aye; JS aye; LC aye.

2. CRE-HAB #1904: LA reported the work completed, with a new Affordable Housing Restriction being prepared for signing and filing at the Registry of Deeds.
3. CRE-HAB #1903: LA reported the work completed, with a new Affordable Housing Restriction signed and ready to be recorded.
4. CRE-HAB #2002: LA reported contracts have been signed, and work will begin soon.
5. CRE-HAB #1901: Applicant has passed away; Housing Specialist investigating the possible recovery of grant funds.
6. CRE-HAB Fiscal Year 2022: It was noted that just under \$60,000 remains in the CRE-HAB account for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2022.
7. CPA FUNDING: There is no change in the \$247,000 request from the Trust for Community Preservation Act funding, being recommended by the Community Preservation Committee.
8. HIGH SCHOOL RFI: LA indicated that the Westport High School RFI (Request For Ideas, etc) has been issued by the Long Term Building Evaluation Committee. LA suggested two possible redevelopment options: a Low Density plan following building demolition that would create 22 housing units (single family homes and duplexes), 12 of which would be designated affordable; and a High Density mixed use plan creating up to 65 affordable rental units and some non-residential uses. He noted that there is a March 10, 2022 deadline for submitting letters of interest to the Long Term Building Evaluation Committee. Asked for a recommendation, LA indicated he would favor a proposal for the rental unit option, which would create more housing opportunities and preserve more of the site for athletic fields and open space. DW suggested that most residents might prefer a mixed income development option for the site, but felt the Trust should support more much-needed low income housing opportunities. AB noted that state legislators have indicated that state priorities have shifted from senior housing to family housing; HL cited community input indicating a need for senior housing. LA agreed that DHCD is favoring accessible family housing development proposals, and noted that Noquochoke Village was built with lots of fully accessible one bedroom units suitable for senior residents. JS proposed that both options be presented to the public so community feedback can be assessed. CD departed the video meeting at 5:05 p.m. JS made a motion to have the Housing Specialist revise the second option concept, and submit a letter of interest to the Long Term Building Evaluation Committee by the deadline. Seconded by DW, the motion passed on a 6-0 roll call vote: HL aye; AB aye; BM aye; DW aye; JS aye; LC aye. The revised concept plan to be distributed to Trust members for comment as soon as possible.

Housing Production Plan: LA indicated that the last Housing Production Plan was approved in 2016, and an updated plan has to be prepared. The Planning Board is undertaking the update project, and is seeking input from the Trust.

HL made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:28 pm. Seconded by JS, the motion passed on a 6-0 roll call vote: HL aye; AB aye; BM aye; DW aye; JS aye; LC aye.

(Approved 3/23/22)