

**Westport Affordable Housing Trust
Meeting of March 15, 2023
at Westport Town Hall**

Participants: Acting Chair James Sabra (JS), BettyAnn Mullins (BM), Henry Lanier (HL), Craig Dutra (CD). Member Ann Boxler (AB) joined the meeting at 4:09 p.m. Also present was Interim Housing Specialist Robert Barboza; Housing Consultant Leonardi Aray of LAA joined the meeting via computer link.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 4:07 p.m. with JS, BM, CD, and HL present, and commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance. AB joined the meeting at 4:09 p.m.

2. Minutes: Feb. 22, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOTION by HL to approve the Feb. 22, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. Second by BM. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

3. Meeting Schedule

Future meeting dates were discussed, and it was agreed that the Trust would meet next via the ZOOM meeting application on Wednesday, April 26, 2023. The date of the May meeting would be confirmed at that time.

4. Financial Report/Invoices/Office Matters:

The Housing Assistance Office Report dated 3-8-23 provided updates on current programs and partnerships was included in the meeting package. The Financial Report dated 3/10/23 showed pending expenditures and the current balances in all Trust accounts. JS reviewed the invoice and voucher from the Interim Housing Specialist for professional services dated 3/8/23 for \$940.00; and an invoice and voucher from Leonardi Aray Architects LLC dated 3/15/23 for \$1960.00.

MOTION by CD to approve payment of the 3/8/23 voucher for Robert Barboza of \$940, and payment of the 3/15/23 voucher for Leonardi Aray Architects LLC for \$1,960. Seconded by BM. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

5. Housing Specialist/LAA Action Plan Recommendations

Housing consultant Leonardi Aray joined the meeting via computer link to discuss the proposed information and application package for the SEED housing development program, and the draft FY2023-25 action plan and budget outlined at the last meeting. Copies of the draft budget and draft action plan were included in the meeting package. Regarding the SEED package, the Chair reported that the plans for Stone Ridge, a proposal for 39 units of over-55 condominium units including six units of affordable housing, had met some resistance from neighbors and the Planning Board, and the plans were being revised. As a result, the developer would not be seeking SEED incentive funding for the project at this time. There was some discussion of whether the revised SEED package should be approved and advertised at this time, or be delayed until the plans are finalized.

MOTION by AB to table approval of the SEED large-scale development program to a future meeting. Seconded by BM. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

Mr. Aray was asked for his recommendations on other Trust programs, starting with the CRE-HAB repair and rehab program. Mr. Barboza reported a balance of \$88,597 in the CRE-HAB budget, and two applications for grant funds in the Housing Assistance Office. Mr. Aray said both applicants were eligible for the program, and provided some details on the scope of work for the two pending

applications. He believed both projects could be funded from the available funds, and recommended that the Trust take positive action on the applications.

MOTION by CD to authorize LAA to move forward with the two pending applications, conducting site visits and developing a scope of work for seeking contractor bids for the projects. Seconded by HL. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

The Chair asked that a summary list of all CRE-HAB grants, and the amounts loaned, be provided to the Trust. There was some general discussion of the parameters of the CRE-HAB program, and the financial instruments used to secure the granted loans. The Chair suggested that in the future, the Trust should “run title” on properties granted CRE-HAB loans to cover the risk of lost grant funds. Mr. Barboza was asked to provide LAA with attorney documents and contact information regarding the CRE-HAB #1901 file (deceased property owner) so Mr. Aray can inquire about the Trust’s claim to the estate.

It was agreed that LAA would provide recommendations for guidelines for a revived Home Opportunity Purchase Program (HOPP) at the next meeting. In general discussion, it was noted that Westport’s SHI (Subsidized Housing Index) of affordable housing currently stands at about 3.7 percent of the total available housing in town. It was suggested that some outreach efforts be undertaken to advise the general population of the great need for more affordable housing in Westport. Mr. Aray and Mr. Barboza were tasked with coordinating a public relations effort promoting the partnership with Habitat for Humanity on the Sodom Road duplex. It was suggested that future public outreach efforts promoting Trust programs and initiatives include web postings, cable television programming, and paid media advertising.

There was some discussion of town plans for redeveloping the former Westport High campus.

7. CPC Agreement Signing

The previous signing of the FY2023 funding agreement with the Community Preservation Committee and Select Board being rejected by the Registry of Deeds, the re-signing of the agreement in the presence of a Notary Public was accomplished upon the arrival of members.

8. New Business

Mr. Barboza noted that the previous Trust chair had reported the resignation of the special legal counsel used by the Trust, and the need to seek new legal counsel. Mr. Aray was tasked with contacting the attorney and confirming the resignation; if that is the case, he will seek a recommendation for a new legal advisor.

MOTION by AB to adjourn the meeting at 5:15 p.m. Seconded by BM. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

Approval Date: 4/3/23