

Westport Affordable Housing Trust
Meeting of April 1, 2020

1. Remote Meeting Procedures: The virtual meeting was set up online via the ZOOM meeting app and called to order at 4:05 p.m. by Chair Liz Collins (LC) with Ann Boxler (AB), James Sabra (JS), Henry Lanier (HL) and David West (DW) participating. Housing Specialist Leonardi Aray (LA) and recording clerk Robert Barboza also participated. The meeting opened with the chair explaining the remote meeting procedures to be followed by the participating members of the Trust.

2. Meeting Schedule: It was noted that the next Trust meeting is scheduled for 4 p.m. on Wednesday, April 22.

3. Invoices/Financial Report: JS made a motion to approve a voucher dated 3/24/20 for invoices for Robert Barboza for \$649.00; Leonardi Aray Architects for \$2,030.00; and the reimbursement to Robert Barboza for Registry of Deeds recording fees of \$331.20; all invoices totaling \$3,010.20; seconded by AB, the vote was 4-0 in favor. HL made a motion to accept the financial report dated 3/27/20, seconded by JS; the vote was 4-0 in favor. DW joined the meeting via telephone link at this point.

4. Rental Assistance Program: LA made a presentation on a potential Rental Assistance Westport (RAW) program for discussion. The program would provide short-term rental assistance (90 to 120 days) to residents currently living in affordable housing; funding could be transferred from the SEED Housing account (\$300,000) or the undesignated proceeds from the transfer of the Noquochoke Village property (\$53,000). The program would be set up using guidelines provided by the Mass. Housing Partnership, with eligibility verified by a partnering agency administering affordable housing properties, and payments going directly to landlords. Tenants receiving Section 8 subsidies would be eligible for the difference between their Section 8 voucher and the rent being charged by their landlords. He noted that at least five residents of Noquochoke Village are in immediate need of some assistance of this kind.

JS suggested that administration of the program would be difficult for the Housing Assistance Office (HAO), and an administrative partner would be needed for it to work. He recognized the need for such a program, but suggested that the Trust wait to see what kind of assistance state officials will be offering residents of affordable housing. AB also urged caution, fearing the HAO would be overwhelmed by requests for aid; LC asked for more detailed projections of possible costs. DW said housing site administrators should be polled about how they might administer the program, and provide a rough estimate of potential costs; LA said he would contact them and return with some estimates of possible costs at the next meeting.

5. Sodom Road Property: LA provided the Trust with a draft of the Purchase & Sale Agreement with Buzzards Bay Area Habitat for Humanity (BBAHH) for the 5.3 acre Sodom Road property, now being reviewed by the BBAHH attorneys. JS inquired about additional subsidies for the anticipated development and was told that up to \$180,400 is being reserved for possible site costs; he also suggested a coronavirus clause be added to the P & S allowing for potential delays in the transfer of the property due to the COVID-19 epidemic. JS made a motion to establish a subcommittee of three Trust members to oversee the development of the property, seconded by AB; the vote was 5-0 in favor.

6. Housing Specialist Report: LA indicated that closing documents for HOPP #180204 have been submitted to DHCD so the property can be included in the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI); heating system improvements may be funded by Citizens for Citizens. The HOPP grant program is not being

advertised at this time. LA also reported that the Affordable Housing Restriction for CRE-HAB #1901 has been recorded at the Registry of Deeds; a site visit for applicant CRE-HAB #1903 determined that the work proposed did not meet program guidelines, and was ruled ineligible for a grant. LA indicated that a 91,000 square foot parcel of land on Gifford Road is being released from the CH. 61A program; he will send a map of the site to Trust members for their review and a vote at the next meeting.

HL raised the question of how many Westport residents moved into Noquochoke Village, which he feels is needed to gauge the success of the development and provide transparency for the use of town funds. LA noted that 68 of the 182 applicants for the original lottery were Westport residents, who were offered preferences for the available units, not guaranteed placement. He questioned how former residents living out of town would be counted in those calculations, and indicated he would not be asking NV management for private information on tenant residency at the time of application.

DW felt the information was needed to show taxpayers who have been seeking that data, and to help determine if better outreach to current residents of Westport is needed for future developments. HL felt the information is needed to determine how effective the selection process was for Westport applicants, and what real benefit to the town has resulted. LC said she would try to get some data from NV management to provide to fellow members.

With no other business on the agenda, JS made a motion to adjourn at 5:05 p.m.; seconded by AB, the vote was 5-0 in favor.

Approved 5/27/20