

## **Westport Affordable Housing Trust Virtual Meeting of June 24, 2020**

Participants: Chair Liz Collins (LC), Henry Lanier (HL), David West (DW), James Sabra (JS), Ann Boxler (AB), BettyAnn Mullins (BM). Also participating by video conference were Housing Specialist Leonardi Aray (LA), and recording clerk Robert Barboza. The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by the Chair, who read the remote meeting notice and advised participants that the meeting was being recorded under the cited provisions of Massachusetts General Laws.

**1. Meeting Schedule and Minutes:** The chair noted that upcoming meetings are scheduled for 4 p.m. on July 22, Aug. 26, Sept. 23, and Oct. 28, 2020. HL made a motion to approve the minutes of the 5/27/20 meeting as amended; the amendment correcting the date in item #2 – Invoices: financial report dated 5/25/20; motion seconded by JS and approved on a 5-0 roll call vote.

**2. Invoices:** LA provided a financial report dated 6/18/20 showing current expenditures of \$1,609; a motion to accept the report as presented came from HL, was seconded by JS, and the motion passed on a 5-0 roll call vote. BM made a motion to approve payment of an invoice from the clerk in the amount of \$209.00, seconded by HL; the motion passed on a 5-0 roll call vote. JS made a motion to approve an invoice from Leonardi Aray Architects in the amount of \$1,400; seconded by HL, the motion passed on a 5-0 roll call vote.

**3. Rental Assistance Program:** LA presented the Trust with updates on the potential Rental Assistance Program (RAW – Rental Assistance Westport). He noted that Noquochoke Village management's most recent report was that two tenants still need assistance with their rent payments, with one tenant unable to pay two months rent. The Community Builders will not be forgiving unpaid rents, but is working on payment plan options for tenants in financial difficulty, LA reported. He also provided information on the state Dept. of Housing & Community Development's RAFT program for emergency assistance to renters. LC indicated this program should be able to help Noquochoke Village residents needing help with rent payments.

LC also suggested that all property rental management companies should be investigating RAFT and other assistance programs offered by area social service agencies; she does not object to helping Noquochoke Village tenants in need if no other aid options are available to them. LA noted there have been no calls or e-mails to the Housing Assistance Office seeking rental assistance in recent weeks; AB suggested that unemployment insurance and government stimulus checks are helping many people in need; LC asked that management of Village Way, Edgewater Apartments, and other private development be contacted and asked what they are doing about tenants with financial difficulties. BM volunteered to contact Edgewater and Village Apartments managers and report back to the chair. JS and HL indicated they were hesitant to set up an official program like RAW unless there is a demonstrated need in the community.

**4. Sodom Road Property Update:** LA reviewed the tentative timeline for the proposed P & S agreement with the Buzzards Bay Area Habitat for Humanity, including possible dates for the three community meetings to be held by BBAHH. He reported that Saltonstall Architects has been retained to develop building plans for the project, and indicated the Trust will have to schedule a meeting with BBAHH to review the project finances once tenants are selected. LA noted the RFP indicated BBAHH was likely to

seek \$180,000 in financial support from the Trust, and that amount has been “reserved” for that purpose in the budget; that request might change at some point.

In response to questions from members, LA indicated that the duplex construction is allowed by right because of adequate frontage and lot size, so no public hearings with Planning Board or other town agencies should be required; preliminary septic system plans and wetlands issues had been approved by the Board of Health and Conservation Commission; final plans from BBAHH will have to go back for review by both those boards. HL asked if the Trust could require a nitrogen free septic design, and LC suggested that request should be made to BBAHH. BM made a motion to approve the purchase and sale agreement with the added condition that a zero nitrogen output be installed on the property, and allowing the chair to sign the revised P & S agreement on the behalf of the entire Trust; the motion was seconded by AB, and passed on a 5-0 roll call vote.

**5. HAO/Housing Specialist Report:** LA reported that a complete CRE-HAB grant application has been received, seeking funding to correct health code violations and needed repairs including new roof and attic insulation, kitchen floor, doors and windows, plumbing, and well service. The housing specialist and JS have visited the property and reviewed the Board of Health list of needed work to allow continued occupation; LA indicated the applicants meet the income limits for a family of three, and the property meets the assessed value restriction. He also reported that the homeowners are willing to sign an affordable housing restriction, and cooperate with the BOH on required clean-up efforts. He recommends moving forward with the grant process for the applicant designated CRE-HAB #1904. BM made a motion authorizing LA to move forward with the application process, obtain contractor quotes, and finalize the scope of work; seconded by HL, the motion passed on a 5-0 roll call vote.

**Adjournment:** With no other business on the agenda, JS made a motion to adjourn at 5:15 p.m., seconded by AB. The roll call vote was 5-0 in favor.

Approved: 8/26/20