

**Westport Affordable Housing Trust
Virtual Meeting of Aug. 26, 2020**

Participants: Chair Liz Collins (LC), Henry Lanier (HL), David West (DW), BettyAnn Mullins (BM). Also participating by video conference were Housing Specialist Leonardi Aray (LA), and Christine Lacourse of Buzzards Bay Area Habitat for Humanity. The meeting was called to order at 4:07 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. Habitat for Humanity Presentation: Christine Lacourse, executive director for the Buzzards Bay Area Habitat for Humanity (BBAHH), was introduced and invited to make a presentation on BBAHH's proposal for the development of the Sodom Road property as a duplex condominium project. She advised the Trust members at the outset that the non-profit would be seeking a \$195,500 grant request to the Trust to help cover site development costs (\$189,000); engineering costs (\$4,000); and condominium association legal fees (\$2,500).

Ms. Lacourse explained that the finalized project proposal included at least three community meetings about the development, establishing relationships with various community organizations, and the use of social media for the recruitment of volunteer or discounted labor partners, and the solicitation of donated or discounted construction materials. DW asked for more details on the community outreach efforts planned. For BBAHH's Marion development, the organization used Community Preservation Act grants, fundraisers, and donations to raise almost \$120,000 to help finance the home, Ms. Lacourse said; for their Mattapoisett development, significant labor donations came from an electrician, the heating system installer, the roofing crew, and the siding installers. LC asked why there was no CPA financing for the Mattapoisett home, and was told that significant donations had made a CPA grant request unnecessary.

Ms. Lacourse provided the financial information for the buyer of the Mattapoisett home, indicating the buyer was in the middle of the low-to-moderate income range. She explained how the condominium agreement will work for a duplex development, and said that BBAHH provides a homeowner "training handbook" for all buyers they work with. Ms. Lacourse also noted that the buyer must agree to have her family and friends supply 300 hours of sweat equity in order to make the financial numbers work.

After the presentation, LA noted that the Trust had already voted to cap Trust grant support for the development at \$200,000, so the BBAHH request for \$195,500 in grant assistance could be accommodated. He explained that the construction schedule has to remain flexible, but the BBAHH will be required by the P & S agreement to secure all local permits and approvals within 180 days; he also indicated that a grant commitment letter will have to be issued by the Trust sometime in September. DW said he wanted time for the Trust to review the final design before the plans are presented to the public at community meetings. LA pointed out that per the RFP for development, the Trust did not require design approval for the duplex structure. After DW insisted that the Trust have some input on the exterior elements, Ms. Lacourse promised the Trust a preview of the final plans before the community meetings. At the end of discussions, BM made a motion to issue a grant commitment letter in the amount of \$195,500; seconded by HL, the motion passed on a 3-0-1 roll call vote: HL aye, BM aye, LC aye, DW abstained.

2. Meeting Schedule and Minutes: The chair indicated that upcoming meetings are scheduled for 4 p.m. on Sept. 23, Oct. 28, Nov. 18 and Dec. 16, 2020. Oct. 28 was mentioned as the probable date of the first BBAHH community meeting, with questions about the possible use of a school or other public building as a meeting place. The minutes of the June 24, 2020 meeting were reviewed, with BM making a motion that the minutes be approved as submitted, seconded by HL. DW questioned why his request that The Community Builders be asked about rental assistance aid for tenants was not in the minutes. DW also asked why his insistence that the Trust request some design approval authority from BBAHH was not in the minutes. No amendments were offered; the roll call to approve passed 4-0; BM aye, HL aye, DW aye, LC aye.

There was more discussion about the design approval issue. LC tasked LA with trying to ensure that the Trust had an opportunity to preview the exterior design as early as possible, as requested by DW. LC said she was certain BBAHH would accept input from the Trust on the plans, and would produce a good final design for the structure; that opinion was also voiced by LA.

3. Invoices: LA provided a financial report dated June 30, 2020 showing current expenditures, with a year-end balance of funds of \$879,697; the anticipated delivery of \$270,000 in CPA funds for FY 2020 will bring the working balance to \$1,126,697. A motion to accept the report as presented came from BM and was seconded by HL; the motion passed on a 4-0 roll call vote: HL aye, BM aye, DW aye, LC aye. BM made a motion to ratify the staff voucher dated 7-17-20 from the housing specialist clerk in the amount of \$2035.50: and approve the 8-19-20 staff voucher totaling \$2,039.00; seconded by HL; the motion passed on a 4-0 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.

5. Staff Contracts: LC noted that the staff consists of two independent contractors whose contracts expired on June 30, 2020, and proposed the contracts be extended for another fiscal year. LA indicated he was seeking only a six-month extension, as he will be leaving his housing specialist position on Dec. 31, 2020. BM made a motion to extend the housing clerk's contract for one year; to extend the contract of the housing specialist until Dec. 31, 2020; and to appoint the chair as a negotiating subcommittee to negotiate new contracts with current and future staffers serving in both positions. The motion was seconded by HL, and passed on a 4-0 roll call vote.

6. HAO/Housing Specialist Report: LA presented a report on the scope of work for the CRE-HAB #1904 grant application, and said that the applicant and he will begin soliciting quotes from local contractors for the needed work. A Title V inspection of the septic system is already planned. He said the Trust will need to make decisions on continuing the HOPP (Housing Opportunity Purchase Program) and SEED programs, and determine what earmarks of available funds should be made for both programs.

7. Ch. 61A Parcels: The Trust reviewed the list provided by LA of four Ch. 61A parcels the town has been asked to release from the program. He recommended that none of the four parcels be investigated as potentially suitable for affordable housing programs. By general agreement, it was decided none of the parcels would be pursued for potential purchase by the Trust.

Adjournment: Before the call for adjournment, BM reported on her conversation with the management of Edgewood Apartments, indicating they have no existing problems with tenants unable to pay their rent because of the pandemic. Management requested any available information the Trust might have

on rental assistance programs. With no other business on the agenda, BM made a motion to adjourn at 5:55 p.m., seconded by HL; the roll call vote was 4-0 in favor.

Approved 9/23/20