

Town of Westport
Westport Affordable Housing Trust Fund
Draft Meeting Minutes
Jan. 23, 2014

Members present: Chair Liz Collins (LC), Vice Elaine Ostroff (EO), Chair Craig Dutra (CD), Warren Messier (WM), and Catherine Williams (CW). Also present: Housing Specialist Leonardi Aray (LA) and recording clerk Robert Barboza.

Members absent: Elaine Ostroff (EO), Brian Corey (BC), Jim Sabra (JS).

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by LC at 4:34 p.m.

Meeting Schedule: LA presented the schedule for upcoming meetings, to be held at 3:30 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of the month – Feb.26, March 26, April 23, May 28, and June 25.

Minutes Review: After a review of the minutes of the Dec. 11, 2013 meeting, WM made a motion that they be accepted as presented, seconded by CD. The motion passed 4-0.

Housing Specialist Report:

Office

LA indicated that the Housing Office has been operating without clerical support since the recent resignation of Housing Clerk Joyce Rowley, and he had obtained the services of a recording clerk (Robert Barboza) for this meeting on an emergency basis. LC reported the resignation effective Jan. 13, 2014 came via e-mail and several phone calls to Ms. Rowley were not returned. A bill detailing hours worked up to the resignation date was received via e-mail; LA's e-mail reply was that the pay voucher would be processed once any documents or other materials belonging to the Trust were returned to Town Hall; e-mail communications are continuing. CW made a motion to accept the resignation of Ms. Rowley effective Jan. 13, 2014, seconded by CD; the vote was unanimous, 4-0. WM made a motion to authorize payment of \$168.00 for 10.5 hours worked, once all Trust materials had been accounted for, seconded by CW. The vote was unanimous, 4-0. LA indicated his annual report had been submitted to the CPC; no response as yet.

In his financial report, LA indicated a balance of \$709,036 as of Jan. 15, 2014; minus pending payment of vouchers, the new balance would be \$702,028.56. A bill from the Dept. of Environmental Protection for annual filing fees (\$800) for Noquochoke Village property was directed to go to the Board of Selectmen for payment. Vouchers presented included \$4,725 for LA; \$565 for applicant # 130107 Paul Borden, home inspection; and \$1,550 for Roger Williams University for the Community Partnership project. CD made a motion to approve vouchers total of \$6,840, seconded by WM. The vote was unanimous, 4-0.

RWU Project

LA advised the board that the proposed student intern project with the Roger Williams University (RWU) Community Partnership Center had been approved on Dec. 15, 2013, and several meetings with faculty member/student mentor Ulker Copur had been held in recent weeks. The project to review and assess 15 potential affordable housing sites is scheduled to run from Jan. 22 through May, 2014 according to the Memorandum of Agreement provided. The first meeting with the RWU students participating will be on Feb. 4, and will include site visits. LA suggested the Westport Housing Authority site on State Road is the most promising location, and said he has been in touch with the Housing Authority director to discuss the project and the pending student visit. LA noted the Memorandum of Agreement has been forwarded to the Board of Selectmen and other town officials for their review. CD made a motion for the Trust to enter into the agreement with the RWU Community Partnership Center, seconded by CW. The vote was unanimous, 4-0. LA noted that \$1,550 in Trust funds has already been voted to cover the miscellaneous expenses related to the project.

Seed Funding Housing Program

LA reported that he has been making inquiries to help locate parties who might be interested in the program, and has talked to a party from Maine who has some experience with the program, and a Westport landlord who is considering rehab work or expansion of the number of units on his property. Research on zoning issues related to eligibility for a mixed use development is underway.

HOPP

A roll call vote was called by LC to enter into executive session to discuss the potential terms of a grant to be awarded to a qualified applicant to the Housing Opportunity Purchase Program, and to reconvene in open session. Motion by CD, seconded by CW: LC, aye; WM, aye; CW, aye; CD, aye. Motion passed 4-0.

Noquochoke Village (NV)

The Community Builders (TCB) pre-application form to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) was reviewed. LA indicated DHCD will approve or deny within the next few weeks; and the project proposal as submitted would be dependent on MassWorks funding to proceed as outlined in the pre-application. There was some discussion of the changes in the proposal, with CD suggesting he was not in favor of a 100 percent affordable project, and that a mixed income development was needed to get community support. LA noted that EO's concerns about units for people with disabilities had been addressed, and that TCB felt that market conditions and rising construction costs had made "top tier" units impractical at this time, so those units had been eliminated from the pre-application proposal.

After the approval of voucher payment list, a motion to adjourn at 5:40 p.m. was made by CW, seconded by CD. The vote was unanimous, 4-0.