

Westport Affordable Housing Trust
Virtual Meeting of Jan. 20, 2021

Participating: Liz Collins (LC), Ann Boxler (AB), Henry Lanier (HL), BettyAnn Mullins (BM), James Sabra (JS); David West (DW); Housing Specialist Leonardi Aray (LA), Recording Clerk Robert Barboza. Absent: Warren Messier.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by the Chair (LC) and commenced with the reading of the Governor's order allowing virtual remote participation meetings under the provisions of the Mass. General Laws Ch. 30A, s20f.

1. Meeting Schedule: The calendar of upcoming meetings was set for 4 p.m. on Feb. 24, and March 24.

2. Minutes: The minutes of the Dec. 16, 2020 meeting were reviewed; Item #5, change text to read "Mr. Aray submitted a contract extension proposal, asking the Trust to extend his contract..." HL made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by JS. The roll call vote was 6-0 in favor, with AB, HL, BM, JS, LC and DW voting aye.

3. Invoices/Financial Report: LA presented a financial report dated 1/18/20 (Jan. 18, 2021), indicating a balance of available funds of \$907,700 after pending expenditures are processed and the Sodom Rd. project funds earmarked. AB made a motion to accept the financial report, including the staff voucher totaling \$2,799.00 in the meeting package, seconded by BM; the motion passed on a 6-0 roll call vote, Aye: AB, BM, JS, DW, HL, LC.

4. Buzzards Bay Area Habitat for Humanity Update: LA reported that the next community info session planned by BBAHFH will be on Feb. 24; the final info session is scheduled for April 28. He noted that the organization is revising the plans to incorporate passive solar design elements; they will begin interviewing applicants soon. AB indicated that she had updated the Board of Selectmen on the project at the board's last meeting. The BOS will be asked to sign a support letter, to be provided by BBAHFH two weeks before an action date so that town counsel can review the document. LC solicited Trust members for the names of potential donors of labor, materials, or professional services to the Sodom Road duplex unit.

5. Housing Assistance Office Report: HOPP: LA reported that the HOPP program is still being advertised, with a Jan. 26 cut-off date for applications; the closing for HOPP #1804 on Dec. 20 was the second home purchase executed through the program.

CRE-HAB #1904 is on hold, as the applicant is declining to sign a contract document; LA confirmed that the \$3,300 expended to date is therefore not secured by an encumbrance of the property. In discussion, JS and DW both suggested a policy change making the signing of a deed rider required before any funds are disbursed; LC said she would like to meet with the applicants, and try to help resolve the reasons for not signing; she was encouraged to do so by members. JS made a motion to have LA check with the BOH on remaining health and safety issues and report to LC, authorized to speak to applicants. Seconded by HL, the motion passed on a 6-0 roll call vote, Aye: AB, BM, DW, JS, HL, LC.

CRE-HAB #1903 has been deemed eligible, with LA waiting for quotes from the applicant.

CRE-HAB #2001 has re-filed a grant application for building repairs, but LA reported a potential zoning issue to be considered, being a basement apartment. DW made a motion to put the case on hold, to be reconsidered if the legality of the apartment unit is verified; HL seconded; the motion passed on a 5-0 roll call vote, Aye: AB, HL, DW, JS, LC.

CRE-HAB #2002 - The Housing Specialist reported that the applicant has provided three quotes for the needed repair work; the estimates totaling more than the \$40,000 grant cap, LA is working with the applicant to revise the scope of work.

6. Chapter 61A Parcels: LA indicated he is researching the development potential of the two Ferry parcels being considered for release. There was no news on the high school re-use committee's agenda; DW made a motion for the Trust write to the re-use committee chair, inviting him to a Trust meeting, and seeking to participate in deliberations for possible re-use options by having a Trust member on the that committee. The motion was seconded by HL, and passed on a 5-0 roll call vote; Aye: AB, DW, JS, HL, LC. There being general agreement that the Ferry parcels were not suitable for affordable housing, the Trust decided not to recommend the town exercise its first option rights.

Regarding the Montessori School property, JS suggested the Trust make an offer to purchase, contingent on securing funding; LA was asked to do a preliminary build-out estimate to see what is feasible for the site, using the existing building and putting on an addition. LC noted Rep. Schmid has indicated some state aid might be available for a new affordable housing development; JS will check with the Diocese's broker to see what interior conditions are, and possible hazardous materials in the building.

7. Housing Component/Master Plan. HL reported that he has volunteered to help revise the Housing Component in the upcoming Master Plan update effort. The 2016 Master Plan is online if Trust members want to review the material and provide input to him.

At 5:45 p.m., JS made a motion to adjourn, seconded by AB; the motion passed on a 6-0 roll call vote, with BM reconnecting to the meeting by telephone. Aye: AB, BM, DW, HL, JS, LC.

Approved 2/24/21