

Westport Affordable Housing Trust Virtual Meeting of Nov. 17, 2021

Members Participating: Chair Liz Collins (LC), Henry Lanier (HL), Jim Sabra (JS), Betty-Ann Mullins (BM); David West (DW). Absent: Ann Boxler. Also present: Housing Specialist Leonardi Aray, recording clerk Robert Barboza.

1. Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m. by the Chair with the above members participating. The Chair commenced the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Reorganization: The Chair called for nominations of officers for the Trust. BM made a motion to re-appoint current Vice Chair Jim Sabra as Vice Chair. Seconded by DW, the motion passed on a 5-0 vote. BM made a motion to re-appoint current Chair Liz Collins as the new Chair. Seconded by DW, the motion passed on a 5-0 roll call vote. HL aye; JS aye; BM aye; DW aye; LC aye.

2. Minutes: BM made a motion to approve the minutes of the Sept. 29, 2021 regular meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by HL, and passed on a 5-0 roll call vote.

3. Meeting Schedule: The Chair indicated that upcoming meetings are planned for 4 p.m. on Dec. 15, 2021; Jan. 26, 2022, and Feb. 23, 2022.

4. Financial Report/Invoices: LA reviewed the financial report dated 11/15/21, reflecting current expenses to be approved and a current balance of \$688,875.39. BM made a motion to approve the 10/6/21 voucher for \$705 payable to Atty. Kathleen O'Donnell; the 10/26/21 voucher totaling \$3,653.50 for Leonardi Aray Architects and clerk Robert Barboza; and the 11/17/21 voucher for \$1,529.00 for Leonardi Aray Architects and clerk Robert Barboza. Seconded by JS, the motion passed on a 5-0 roll call vote.

5. BBAHFH Update: LA reported that the project guidelines have been approved by DHCD, ensuring that the two condominiums to be built will be included on the town's Subsidized Housing Index (SHI) as affordable units. He noted that planning for meeting Passive House standards is continuing, although there is no need for Passive House certification to be obtained. The Chair publicly thanked BM and DW for attending the recent groundbreaking ceremony, as well as CPC Chair Betty Slade.

6. HAO Report:

- 1) LA suggested that the Trust consider moderate income Housing Opportunity Purchase Program (HOPP) grants for units that would require affordable housing restrictions to be executed, but would not be included on the SHI list. He offered a \$100,000 maximum grant figure for discussion.
- 2) LA noted that CRE-HAB #1904 was progressing, with the signing of contracts for the work proposed.
- 3) CRE-HAB # 1903 AHR has been recorded, with mortgage recording pending.
- 4) CRE-HAB # 2002 application has been re-submitted, scope of work being revised.
- 5) CRE-HAB #1901, completed in 2019, will require recovery of the loan/grant as the owner has passed away. LA indicated that the Trust should consider releasing the AHR on the property.
- 6) Regarding the CRE-HAB program for Fiscal Year 2022, LA is proposing an increase in grant awards to \$50,000 for applicants earning up to 80 percent of area median income, and increasing the assessed value limit to \$350,000.

7. Ch. 61 a Parcels: No action required, parcel has been released by Select Board.

8. CPA Funding Request: No action.

9. High School Re-Use Plans: LA reported on continuing research into the status of the former high school building, indicating that the town has allocated \$100,000 to maintain the building for the current fiscal year; that the school administration offices will remain in the building for at least a year; and that the property is a public well site. Estimated demolition costs were around \$2 million. It was suggested that the Trust would have to take control of the property to expend a significant amount of money on studies of potential for an affordable housing re-use. A town meeting vote would be required to transfer control of the site to the Trust. Assisted living, a senior center, and town offices were all mentioned as possible future uses in the initial possible re-use assessment.

LC noted that she had advised the Select Board of the Trust's interest in the site for possible housing options more than a year ago, but has received no feedback from town officials. She felt the Long Term Building Committee should invite the Trust to their next meeting to discuss that interest. LA estimated that a basic market analysis to gauge local demand for new apartments and townhouses could be undertaken for about \$6,000 to \$7,000. JS noted re-use proposals typically take a long time to come to fruition; he feels there is time to communicate the great need for affordable housing to the Long Term Building Committee and Select Board before any re-use plans are proposed. JS suggested the most likely re-use plan would be mixed use, commercial and housing; he believes further site study funded by the Trust would demonstrate the Trust's serious interest in the property to town officials.

LC cited the 1,000-plus person waiting list for Noquochoke Village apartments as clear indication there is local demand for affordable apartments. DW supported the Trust's undertaking of a basic site analysis to generate realistic options for development which could be discussed further. He agreed the study would make it clear that the Trust is seriously interested in the property. LA indicated he would check with legal counsel on the propriety of the Trust expending funds for such a study without having control of the site. LC indicated she would contact the Town Administrator or AB, the Select Board liaison, to discuss the matter further. JS made a motion to request that Ms. Boxler determine if the Select Board has any potential re-use plans on the table. Seconded by DW, the motion passed on a 5-0 roll call vote.

10. Trust Membership: The Chair noted that the Trust is currently short one member, and indicated that former Trust member Craig Dutra is planning to apply to the Select Board to fill that vacancy.

11. Executive Session: Passed over.

JS made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:15 p.m. Seconded by HL, the motion passed on a 5-0 roll call vote.

Approved 12/15/21 meeting