

Westport Affordable Housing Trust Virtual Meeting of Sept. 27, 2023

Participants: Craig Dutra (CD), Ann Boxler (AB), Vice Chair Henry Lanier (HL), Teri Bernert (TB); BettyAnn Mullins (BM); and Interim Housing Specialist Robert Barboza.

1. Call to Order

The virtual meeting was called to order by the Vice Chair at 4:30 p.m. with HL, CD, AB, and BM participating via computer link. TB joined the meeting at 4:35 p.m. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance, led by the Vice Chair.

2. Minutes: Aug. 23, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes.

The minutes were reviewed by members, with no questions or comments.

MOTION by AB to approve the minutes of the August 23, 2023 meeting as presented. Second by BM. The motion passed on a 4-0 roll call vote: HL aye; AB aye; BM aye; CD aye.

3. Meeting Schedule

Future meeting dates were discussed, and it was agreed that the next virtual meeting would be scheduled for 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 25, 2023 and Nov. 29, 2023.

4. Proposals for Legal Services

An updated list of potential legal service providers was included in the meeting package. No action taken.

5. Financial Report/Invoices/Office Matters

Mr. Barboza reviewed the financial report dated 9/22/23 showing current expenses of \$2,810.00 and a balance of \$614,830 in Trust accounts.

MOTION by CD to approve payment of the 9/20/23 voucher from Robert Barboza for \$1,060.00 for professional services; and the 9/22/23 voucher from Leonardi Aray Architects for \$1,750.00 for consulting services. Second by AB. The motion passed on a 5-0 roll call vote: HL aye; AB aye; BM aye; CD aye; TB aye.

HAO Report: Mr. Barboza reported a conversation with the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Chair Betty Slade, inviting the Trust to an Oct. 12 CPC meeting where potential grant applications will be discussed. The CPC is urging the Trust to file an application for available CPA grant funds for the coming fiscal year. Mr. Lanier indicated that he will attend the CPC meeting to represent the Trust. Mr. Barboza noted that state grant monies for affordable housing are also available through a variety of programs, but are mainly limited to funding support for viable development proposals, not pre-development planning and design work. Ms. Slade joined the ZOOM session and repeated the invitation for the Trust to attend the Oct. 12 CPC meeting and discuss potential projects. The deadline for final grant applications is in December; any grant funding recommendations would have to be approved at the spring Town Meeting. She suggested that the Trust send a volunteer observer to CPC meetings as a regular liaison representing affordable housing interests. The Vice Chair expressed his support for a volunteer liaison to the CPC. Ms. Slade urged consideration of a vacant town-owned site off Drift Road for affordable housing; formerly land-locked, there is now an access road to the property. She also suggested that the Trust contact The Community Builders Inc., (TCB) the developers and operators of Noquochoke Village, to see if the non-profit corporation might be interested in partnering with the town on a new development. Mr. Barboza outlined some of the

public procurement policies to be followed when pursuing such partnerships. TB volunteered to open a dialogue with TCB representatives she is in contact with at the Island Housing Trust.

Discussion of future plans for municipal re-use of the old high school campus took place; the general consensus was that continuing to propose some affordable housing options for that site would not be productive, and other potential development sites should be investigated. Members debated the Trust's options for actively pursuing the acquisition of 10+ acres of land suitable for affordable multi-family development. Mr. Barboza and Leonardi Aray Associates were asked to provide an outline for steps to be taken to advertise publicly for available land at the next meeting. BM departed the meeting.

MOTION by HL to send a letter to the Long Term Building Committee, Select Board and Community Preservation Committee expressing Trust interest in considering any current or future surplus municipal properties that could be potential affordable housing sites. The letter should also make clear that the Trust is planning to be actively pursuing the acquisition of private property for new affordable development. Second by CD. The motion passed on a 4-0 roll call vote: HL aye; AB aye; CD aye; TB aye.

6. BBAHFH Request

Mr. Barboza was asked to draft a letter to BBAHFH indicating no decision on additional funding, and asking for a project budget report.

7. Housing Consultant – LAA on CRE-HAB Program

Consultant Leonardi Aray of LAA had notified the office of a CRE-HAB grant applicant seeking a waiver from the Title 5 Inspection requirement for all rehab projects. It was noted that owner claimed the \$650 inspection fee was a hardship, despite the potential for a prompt reimbursement of the cost. The Board of Health reported no reported issues with the septic system. Mr. Barboza noted that water tests and septic system inspections were always required of all CRE-HAB applicants as stated in the program guidelines. Mr. Aray suggested that the Trust has the ability to waive any program guidelines if they see fit to do so.

MOTION by CD that the Trust waive the Title 5 Inspection requirement for CRE-HAB #2202 as requested. Second by AB. The motion passed on a 4-0 roll call vote: HL aye; AB aye; CD aye; TB aye.

7. New Business

None.

MOTION by CD to adjourn the meeting at 5:57 p.m. Seconded by AB. The motion passed on a 4-0 roll call vote: HL aye; AB aye; CD aye; TB aye.

Approved Date: 10/25/23