

5-28-14 Westport Affordable Housing Trust Fund

Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting at Town Hall was called to order at 3:30 p.m. with present members: Chair Liz Collins (LC), Elaine Ostroff (EO), Warren Messier (WM), Craig Dutra (CD); Housing Specialist Leonardi Aray (LA), Recording Clerk Robert Barboza. Absent were members Catherine Williams, James Sabra, and Brian Corey.

The minutes from the 4/23/14 meeting were reviewed; Warren Messier made a motion to amend the minutes to correct scrivener's errors submitted by Elaine Ostroff. Approved 3-0 with Mr. Dutra abstaining as he was not present at that meeting.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE OFFICE: Invoice in the amount of \$3,657.50 for Housing Specialist LA was reviewed and unanimously approved; invoice of \$420 for the office clerk was reviewed and unanimously approved.

Housing Specialist LA reports that state Dept. of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) has approved repair cost list for the Reed Road property; the purchase & sale agreement is expected to be finalized soon. A schedule of potential future meeting dates was discussed, with 3:30 p.m. meetings on June 25 and July 23, 2014 were agreed upon, with no meeting planned in August. CD motion and EO second to authorized the chair to sign warrant for invoices if there is no August meeting; approved unanimously.

CD raises the issue of whether the WAHTF records and expenditures will be reviewed as part of the annual town audit. LA was directed to check with the town treasurer to check on that point. There was also some discussion of whether to ask selectmen if the Westport Housing Partnership should be disbanded, and its duties transferred to the WAHTF, as the annual deadline for reappointment requests is June 9. CD volunteered to draft a letter to send to selectmen to make that suggestion; motion by CD, second by EO to send that letter to the board, unanimously approved. It was noted that CW has indicated she will not seek reappointment, so a replacement will need to be recruited.

LA reported on the recent Homeless Veterans forum in Westport, which he attended with LC and EO. He collected considerable resource materials to be made available to the public through the Housing Assistance Office outreach efforts. LC noted that DHCD is very interested in producing affordable housing for veterans; EO suggested the WAHTF promote home rehabilitation programs to Westport veterans. LA was directed to work on development plan for the land behind Greenwood Terrace; contact Connie Desbiens at Dartmouth Housing Authority for update of Dartmouth plans for affordable housing for veterans; contact Westport Veterans Service Officer for statistics on the number of veterans in town as a potential market for outreach efforts.

LA reported that income limits have changed for HOPP program eligibility, and he plans to revise and update the HOPP application forms to reflect those changes and re-advertise the program through posters, flyers and other media. He hopes to simplify the program guidelines, setting one fixed grant amount for all applications; he estimated that over 100 hours of his time have been dedicated to HOPP program since it was initiated.

Reviewing the proposed changes in the SEED program, the Trust agreed to proceed with suggested SEED revisions #1 and #2; the Trust's general agreement was that the Home Preservation Program

guidelines (#3, home repair, utilities, accessibility grants, etc.) not be adopted at this time. LC volunteered to participate in LA conference call to Citizens For Citizens to talk about their assistance programs; future conference call with Catholic Social Services is also suggested. LA's financial report and a spending plan for the next 12 months was presented. CD motion and WM second to approve items #1 and #2 on the FY15 financial plan was unanimously approved.

ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY (RWU) COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM: LA reports that electronic files of student presentations will be delivered soon. WM noted that none of the presentations included traffic impact considerations; LA noted that there are potential contamination issues to be investigated before the Drift Road land receives any further consideration. LA said that feedback from other town departments on the Drift Road site needs to be collected before any potential recommendations for this site are developed; item to be on next agenda.

Update from EO on working with the Planning Board on the housing section of the Master Plan update; the next Planning Board public forum to include housing goals, scheduled for Sept. 27. EO reports that the town's accessory apartment bylaw needs to be reviewed, and recommendations from the WAHTF should be made. EO suggests the DHCD's Compact Neighborhood program could be suitable for Central Village housing development plans, and the Trust needs to learn more about that program. LA reports errors in promotional package from Delphic Associates for Briggs Landing development; 16 affordable houses are planned for that development.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.