

MINUTES

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND

Friday, March 9, 2018

2 Fairgrounds Road Conference Room

Board Members Present: Brian Sullivan (Chairman); Linda Williams (Vice Chair) – arrived at 10:40); Rita Higgins, Brooke S. Mohr, Reema Sherry, John Trudel, III

Board Members Not Present: Isaiah Stover

Others Present: Judi Barrett; Tucker Holland

- I. Mr. Sullivan called the meeting to order at 10:35 AM
- II. Approval of the Agenda: Ms. Sherry moved to approve the agenda, Ms. Higgins seconded and the motion carried unanimously.
- III. Mr. Holland introduced Judi Barrett who authored the Housing Production Plan. Mr. Holland summarized the goals of our work with Ms. Barrett:
 - To discuss the communication issues between the Trust Fund and other Town boards and committees, particularly the Finance Committee, following the comments that had been made during the budget process.
 - To establish priorities and plans for the Trust Fund for the next 3 years
 - To try to look forward rather than focusing on what has already happened/been said.

Mr. Holland introduced Megan Trudel who will be the PLUS staff person assigned to assist the Trust Fund with communication and administration, taking over for Catherine Ancero.

10:40 – Ms. Williams arrived

Ms. Barrett invited the group to identify the things that are going well for the Trust Fund. The group named the following:

- CCAP program that has been created, amended, expanded and now works efficiently, having helped approximately 26 families with closing cost assistance loans
- The Trust Fund is now made up of a committed group now bring a broad range of perspectives and experience to the effort. Meetings are better attended and ore efficient.

- The Trust has developed a good relationship with the CPC resulting in consistent financial support from CPC
- The Trust has entered into an agreement with the Land Bank to partner on land acquisition. While no properties have been identified for housing as yet, the process is in place
- The Trust has a working budget that tracks existing program spending and allocates reserve funds for future priorities.

Ms. Barrett suggested that the Trust consider additional training regarding the general functioning of Town boards as well as the specifics of the affordable housing process.

She also recommended that the Trust develop a codified set of guidelines to define what we do, how and why we do it as a framework for funding requests and uses.

Ms. Higgins identified communication as an area for growth for the Trust. Improving communication to the other Town boards and committees as well as the community at large. She also would like to see better data collection that would offer measurable results of the work of the Trust. Moving from what has been a more reactive strategy to a more proactive one.

Ms. Barrett recommended that the Trust utilize a “Logic Model Process” for strategic planning. A strategic plan would help the Trust to define the problem, assess available resources and develop plans in order to achieve desired outcomes. The gathering of information regarding the public perception of the Trust would also be helpful.

Tentative plans were made for a 4-session strategic planning process with Ms. Barrett on the following dates:

5/23 9:30 – 1:30
 6/27 9:30 – 11:30
 7/25 9:30 – 11:30
 8/22 9:30 – 1:30

There was a discussion about the recent opposition to the 6 Fairgrounds Rd. project. Ms. Barrett noted that there is almost always opposition to any affordable housing project and that “taking the high road” and adopting the position that it is the right thing to do for the community is the best course of action.

The group agreed to create a one-page summary that highlights what the Trust has accomplished to hand out at town meeting. Tucker agreed to develop this for review at the next meeting.

The question was asked about what position the Trust Fund members should take at Town Meeting regarding the two articles that propose to void the contract for the 6 Fairgrounds Rd. project and to prohibit the use of town resources for affordable housing for 7 years. While Town Counsel has deemed the articles illegal, the Moderator may allow for some discussion on the floor. Some members expressed concern that the discussion could go “sideways” and end up harming public perception of the Trust. Others expressed concern

that silence from the Trust members could result in only anti-affordable housing rhetoric dominating the discussion. The suggestion was made that the members be ready to speak up, using the summary document as a reference tool to focus our comments. Tucker agreed to check with the Moderator to see if it is likely that discussion on the articles will be allowed. The member will use the next meeting to prepare for Town Meeting.

Ms. Mohr moved to adjourn at 12:40 PM. Ms. Higgins seconded and the motion was carried.

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 20, 2018 at 11AM

Respectfully Submitted,

Brooke Mohr