

Affordable Housing Trust (AHT)
Minutes
Meeting of October 30, 2014

In Attendance:

Members Present: Michael Luster, Mary John Boylan and Ruth Pino

Absent: Betsy Works, George Sibley, Chair

Staff: Tom Daniel, CD Director, Deborah Laurie, Sr. Project Manager and Emily Freedman, Sr. Project Manager

Audience: Ms. Lucinda J. Seigel

The Meeting was called to order at 5:14 pm.

First item on the agenda was the minutes from the May 8, 2014 meeting. Minutes were reviewed by members; Mary John Boylan motion to accept minutes as is and seconded by Tom Daniel. All in favor, yes; motion passed to accept minutes of May 8, 2014.

Ruth requested an update regarding the Kirk Noyes, Maplewood Avenue school project. Tom indicated that the site plan needed some modifications to achieve the best design, but he has all his permits including the Board of Appeals and is ready to go. There will be two affordable units.

Deb Laurie gave an update of the Housing Forum that was held in September. There were two tours prior to the meeting one in Rockport at the Rockport High School Apartments in which Emily attended and the second tour was at Haven Terrace which both Emily and Deb attended. Mickey Northcutt of the North Shore Community Development Coalition (NSCDC) gave a presentation regarding their projects in Salem. They produce mainly rental units, mostly 2-4 unit projects, but have done some larger ones. The second presentation was from Karin Milchman, Metropolitan Planning Council (MAPC). They work with communities on a variety of issues, one of which includes affordable housing. They can also provide technical assistance such as housing assessments, provision of housing statistics, and mapping services.

Tom indicated to the Committee that the Community Development Department is working with MAPC now regarding Railroad Avenue which includes some ideas regarding apartments and condos that could be produced if certain parcels became available. Some people prefer a different walkable urban life style and amenities close by. Their last public meeting was in September. The report is expected in November. MAPC is a good resource to work with on a housing assessment. They have available grants to apply for.

Bill asked Tom if the city has actually ever done a housing assessment? Tom does not believe so; we have base line data, but not enough to qualify need and opportunity. A housing production plan could provide data to indicate how much housing production we would need to produce X amount of units per year to meet a long term goal. Gloucester has approximately 6.9% affordable housing units and the State requirement is 10%.

Tom noted the Governor's statewide housing production of 10,000 units. Ruth asked if this would just be for affordable units, but Tom indicated it would be a plan for all types of housing production for everyone.

No one attended the Housing Forum in October, however, Deb indicated that Bill Dugan attended and reported to the Community Preservation Committee at their meeting held on October 21st. He reported that this forum was sponsored by the Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance (MAHA), entitled *Housing Design: What does affordable housing look like?* He said the forum concentrated on financing and development of affordable housing by private practitioners, a planner and a real estate development consultant. He said there was much discussion about the use of tax credits in combination with many other sources of funding needed to create affordable housing. The planner showed several examples of affordable developments designed to fit appropriately into their immediate surroundings. He said the main "take away" from the forum was the need for a good site, strong public outreach and a willing developer in order to improve chances of success in developing affordable housing.

Tom discussed again using Trust or CPA to fund a plan to promote affordable housing; the Action Plan is another opportunity. The roll of the Community Development Department is to manage stable and quality housing and having a document or policy to work from would be valuable.

Ruth indicated that zoning still makes building affordable housing difficult. She talked about Mr. DeFranza developing housing in West Peabody in 2009. He worked to convert ranch style homes into units for seniors that were basically assisted living units. However, in Gloucester when you develop assisted living units, the square footage requirement doubles. Lupine Lane would have been a good site for this type of development; the current zoning is 10,000 square feet, but if assisted living were to be done, it would have to be 20,000 square feet, which makes it impossible to make a project affordable. She also mentioned that she attended an event with Councilor McGeary and someone brought up the topic of assisting living facilities.

Tom mentioned that whether MAPC or the AHT provides policy documentation and data, a path for Gloucester to pursue is needed. The cost for an assessment could be in the form of a grant or the Trust could fund.

Mary John Boylan suggested that the Trust does have a policy to promote individual projects as they come in, but not necessarily city-wide.

It was asked by one of the members whether Kirk Noyes would be requesting funding from the Trust; Tom indicated no, that he has his funding in place and actually will be producing two affordable units and contributing money to the Trust.

Ruth indicated when the Housing Coalition existed, affordable housing was on minds of people, but not so much today, but it is coming back to attention.

It was mentioned whether or not the subject of affordable housing was discussed in any of the debates? Not really an issues that was discussed, except the topic of people being housed in motels was discussed. Mary John Boylan mentioned that is because there are not enough shelters.

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Discussion continued regarding what types of affordable housing is needed. Maybe more rental than homeownership units are needed? Not everyone should or can be a homeowner. More units produced like the Marsh Street project.

Other Business:

Treasurer's Report by Michael indicates from the Bank Statement provided that there is a balance of \$253,939.40 in the AHT account and that there was no funds awarded in 2014. He also asked if this monthly statement could be provided at all the meetings. Deb indicated that they could be.

Also, the Trust asked when the next two Housing Forums were taking place. Deb indicated that she would send the flyer out again to the Trust members.

Next meeting: There will be no meeting for the month of November unless something comes up.

Motion to adjourn: Mary John Boylan and seconded by Tom Daniel.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Deborah Laurie, Senior Project Manager