

AHTFC MEETING October 30, 2023

Town of Stockbridge Affordable Housing Trust Fund Committee Meeting held in person and via Zoom, October 30, 2023

Members in Attendance: Member Mills, Chair Warner, Member Donovan, Member White
Online: Member Ackerman, Member Wheeler, Member Auerbach
Guest: Michael Gitelmaker

Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on September 21, 2023. Member Auerbach made the motion to approve and Member Donovan seconded. All in favor.

October 17, 2023 Meeting minutes will be revised and approved at the next meeting.

Review of AHT Terms:

The appointments for the AH Committee are based on the Fiscal year and will be up in June. Here are the terms of the Affordable Housing committee to date:

Ranne Warner - 2024
Elisabeth Wheeler - 2024
Patrick White - 2024
Mark Mills - 2025
Jan Ackerman - 2025
Micayla Donovan - 2025
Bruce Auerbach - 2025

Pine Woods Updates

- Member Wheeler and Chair Warner have spoken with Kathy Wiggins showing her the preliminary plan for the new garden site and playground. She gave us the go ahead.
- Met with a MA certified playground designer. Waiting for the proposal.
- Chair Warner: Botanical Garden director reviewed the Pine Woods garden space and suggested we look at their new campers garden.
- Another potential source of funds through the town....see below.
- We need the playground plan before the end of the year in order to keep the ARPA funds granted to the AHT by the town.

Community Block Grant: Member Mills update on the conversation with Michael Canales

- How should CBG have been handled?
- Acknowledgement has been made that it had not been handled well and they will try to get additional funding.
- Also, \$30,000 may be available for handicapped accessibility at the Pine Woods Playground. Has to hear back from the State. Were funds available for a garden or the playground? Ask the town administrator for clarification.

Housing Production Plan:

Review of properties in other towns. GB has a few properties that they have completed.

Note: Possible site for AH at 15 East Street. The Lee sewer is within 400 ft. It is located on Devon Rd.

Presentation by Michael Gitelmaker, owner of 15 East St. property that's for sale.

- The property is located on the corner of Rattlesnake and Route 7 with 6 acres and 10 buildings (previously the Lavan Center)
- Mr. Gitelmaker said a Non-profit Buyer from Springfield working with migrant workers has applied with a Federal Agency to secure funding. Though an offer has been made, it hasn't been accepted yet. Mr. Gitelmaker stated he doesn't see it as a good fit for Stockbridge housing needs.

Possibilities suggested for the property by Mr Gitelmaker:

- 14-20 units of Luxury housing, (check zoning). Would generate tax dollars.
- Member White asked him to consider selling the property to the town for 40 units of AH. Mr Gitelmaker said most of the buildings could be removed for reuse. States most buildings are in good structural shape. Or the Main house could be brought up to code, taken down to the studs, or remove the building and start again.

Note: There is a 7+ acre piece of property up the hill owned by him that has a well that he reports can service a few hundred people on the 15 East Street property.

Mr Gitelmaker:

- Would ask that the main building with 32 bedrooms be divided into units.
- There is a condemned building. Once taken down it has to be replaced within a year.
- Main Building: He suggests having a wraparound porch, with entrances to each unit from the outside. It would look completely different. If you build something new, it would be more economical and maintenance would be lower.
- Mr Gitelmaker said he has spoken with a development team out of NY who builds AH. He could bring them in to develop the plan and keep it economical now and in the future.
- Asking price is 1.2 million all cash.
- Mr Gitelmaker said, the Springfield Buyer offered 1.8 million in order to have time to work with government grant application.
- How much would each AH lot/unit cost? Unknown.

Gitelmaker stated he has a development team that could build the development if the town wants to bring them in. He does see the need for AH and understands the importance of bringing it to town. It would be in the town's best interest to develop themselves but Mr Gitelmaker offered to help.

The Stockbridge Housing Production Plan will be completed in a few months. We are not in a position to move forward with this at this time. Mr Gitelmaker's timeline: Let him know what time we need and he will keep us updated on other proposal. Expects to have an answer from present offering group in 30 - 90 days. He stated he understands the needs we have here in Stockbridge and feels AH is the best use of the property.

School Merger update:

Member White updated the committee on the School and declining enrollment. AH would help by bringing in younger families children which would bolster enrollment and keep ratios the same as it is presently.

Challenge will be on the operational side of the school district. The town gets charged by student headcount for the school budget. We could be planning together with the AH groups in GB and W Stockbridge. Get an idea of the overall plans. Can scale a little bit to keep costs down. Presently 30% of Stockbridge Budget goes to school costs.

Follow up discussion of presentation of 15 East St property:

- Prioritize options and opportunities we have in the works. Make conscious decisions about what we are going to do next. Do we save the buildings or raze them? R-1 zoning on 6 acres. The water resource is on a separate 7 acre parcel on Rattlesnake Rd

Motion to adjourn: Chair Warner, second by Member White and everyone else!

Respectfully submitted,

Elisabeth Wheeler, Affordable Housing Trust Fund Committee Member

A full meeting of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Committee can be viewed at [ctsbtv.org](https://www.ctsbtv.org). go to government, in the search bar, type in Stockbridge Affordable Housing, then look for the date of the meeting you want to listen to.