

AHTFC Meeting Minutes, January 29, 2024

Town of Stockbridge Affordable Housing Trust Meeting held in person and via Zoom on January 29, 2024

Members in Attendance: Member Mills, Member Wheeler, Member White, Vice Chair Ackerman

Members on Zoom: Chair Warner, Member Donovan and Member Auerbach

In Attendance: Consultant Karen Sunnarborg, Michael Canales, Jackie Harris, Cokie Forbes, Tom Forbes, Nikki Amdur, Teresa Zanetti, Sergio Delmolino, and Chelsey Simmons

Also on Zoom: Nancy Mills, Carole Owens, and Anita Schwerner

Approval of January 11, 2024 Meeting Minutes: Motion to approve by Member Mills and seconded by Member Donovan. All in favor.

Review of the Housing Production Plan Draft led by Vice Chair Ackerman

Main features

Housing Needs assessment

Community Housing Workshop and Survey

II Challenges to Development

III Annual Housing Production Goals

IV Housing Strategies

Community Housing Workshop

Planning Board and Select Board review and approval of the Plan

Housing Needs Assessment

1638 homes

80% were built before 1980

About ½ were built before 1950

811 full time residential homes (about 50% of all homes)

113 affordable rentals at PW's, Heaton Ct, and Riverbrook (> 10% State requirement)

Have only added 40 housing units in the last 10 years. (At Riverbrook)

Resident Population

Has declined 15% since 2000

Since 2010 - Median age has gone from 41 to 60

Fewer in all age groups - except 65+

Decline in student population over the last decade of 29%

Decrease in household median income from \$55K to \$46,5K

House costs are becoming more difficult for many residents

2022 median price - Single family residence was \$575,000. Not affordable for most residents now.

1 in 3 residents spend over 30% of income on housing

1 in 5 residents spend over 50% of income on housing

Member White added:

In the US, there are 1.05 births for every death. In Stockbridge there are 3 deaths for every birth.

The challenge is keeping the next generation in town.

Member Mills: Rising cost of housing attributes to the loss of the middle class.

Community Housing Workshop and Survey

General consensus to focus on young adults, young families and those with fixed incomes

Pursue cluster homes, ADU's, multi-family homes and sweat equity opportunities

Develop existing and/or town owned property, while preserving open space

Challenges to Development

~ Zoning - a few might be modified to help build a development. Specific, not general overall changes.

~ Water and sewer - services only cover 60% of the town and not all are at capacity. Affects where we would develop some housing. Location dependent

~ Endangered species. Location dependent

~ Age of housing stock for preservation or converting a house to multifamily.

~ Availability of financing and down payments

~ Transportation - location dependent

~ Community perceptions

Summary of Housing Strategies

The AHT will be hosting another community workshop before the HPP is finalized by the AHT. It will be presented to the planning board and select board for their input and approval.

Financial: Added RTI bylaw last year which links payment that payment to the AHT

Member White: Proposing a 1% event ticket tax for help with housing

Secure other financial resources

Zoning strategies for ADU's (governor Healy is working on that as a by right modification).

Identify modest opportunities for a wider range of housing choices in specific areas. Use changes to allow more diverse options to be developed. Flex housing to allow for two smaller houses together rather than another 5,000 sf home.

Review short term rental law

State has required strategies specific to zoning.

Stockbridge needs AH but do townspeople want it to really happen?

It's not necessary to change zoning town wide. We can add a street or two to the overlay districts. Be creative here.

Identify specific things that won't change the character of the town but allows for more housing in certain places.

Promote multi-family and mixed-use development in and near the downtown.

Update the use map in zoning

ADU's tend to be more affordable. To date, very few have been built where their development has been written into the zoning by-laws. ADU's are not easily affordable to build.

There has been a trend for STR businesses to buy properties for rental purposes.

Promote multi-family and mixed use in the downtown. Suggestion of changing zoning to be a little more flexible in the downtown area.

Development and preservation strategies

~Join with developers on privately owned property. There are no solid plans right now that have been brought to the AHT

~ Make suitable public property we might have (including donated) look at whether we can develop into Affordable Housing over the next 5 years.

Establish Housing preservation initiatives for the older houses in town.

~ Funding, low-cost loans, upgrades, lead removal, insulation. There are state programs that can help.

~ Impediment removal - remediation must be done first. Bailey/Boyd is applying for us.

Berkshire Regional Planning can't come in to help until the remediation is completed.

Stockbridge qualifies for Justice 40 for support with certain types of housing issues.

Other possible properties to add AH. Lavan Center, Heaton Court, Morris land

Stockbridge Housing Production Plan -

5 year plan that is aspirational.

Focus on the area we should be looking at to develop

Should the Focus be more on rental or home ownership properties?

~ **Rentals** - almost all financing opportunities/subsidies are geared towards rentals from State and Federal Government. Can get to lower income tiers.

Using 40B these units would add to the number of AH units Stockbridge has.

Rentals turn over more frequently, more available over time, more beneficiaries. .

More housing diversity and choices

~ **Home ownership** - Would need substantial subsidies. Need to find every way to get money in the trust, Residential Inclusion Tax, 1% ticket tax.

Question on timing and the mix of rental and/or ownership can't be answered yet.

Karen's plan suggests 80% rental, 20% ownership. These numbers can be changed. See what the options are going forward. Rentals may be cheaper route for now with the subsidies we have available to the AHT.

Consider a tiny house overlay district only for public housing specifically for young people.

Senior Housing at Heaton Ct., and deed restricted affordable homes to create stable populations in town.

Figure out ways to get the young families back to have long term deep ties in the community.

Do we want to identify 25 units more or less? Stick with the 25 to meet the requirements?

1. Look at the balance between home ownership and rental?
2. What are the options going forward?
3. How do we accomplish the housing goals?

1. Privately owned with a developer
2. Homes on town owned land (Heaton court)

Consultant: 50/50 ownership/rental sounds more comfortable as an approach rather than 20/80%.

Benefits of the town for doing this plan:

By submitting the housing production plan we have more access to grants.

Our population is based on primary residences. Although there are 1600+ residences only @800+ are used as the base resulting in the 13% of AH the town already has in place.

Member White suggested the AHT could focus on rentals for the elderly and younger residents. And offer home ownership to the missing middle as incentive to stay in town and raise their families.

Can it be written in the plan to be more flexible with the type of housing we can offer? Consultant Sunnarborg will write it into the plan this way and see if the state asks for specific plans.

Tiny homes could be offered as rentals and/or home ownership.

Noted by Mr Delmolino: There is little in Stockbridge for young people, with or without families to do in town: no affordable places to eat, little available for daily needs like a hardware store, few things to draw younger people to town.

Member Wheeler asked Mr Delmolini if he would consider the establishment of a young person committee to review the town's needs to attract younger families. He was in favor. Other suggestions for a draw to Stockbridge le: Bring a beer garden downtown, have a place that is affordable to eat for locals. Make a master plan.

(Member Auerbach had to excuse himself as did Consultant Sunnarborg).

CPC funds ~

It was reported that three existing AH properties will be asking for money for:

Riverbrook ~ replacement of chimney

Stockbridge Housing Authority ~ Additional foundation work

Pine Woods ~ money for new boilers. They are quite old and beginning to fail.

~ Suggestion: The AHT will ask for undesignated funds for future use to buy properties as they come up or to put into future housing projects. The AHT will get all the necessary parts in place to be able move forward, le. a deed restriction should be ready to acquire a house or property as it comes on the market.

Vote to proceed with Berkshire Botanical Garden on development of vegetable garden for Pine Woods:

Motion to approve was tabled until the Trust receives a response from Construct, Inc.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) ~ A 1.3 million request has been submitted from the trust.

All letters from the town entities were submitted from the town. The AHT will be protected up to \$100,000. CDBG will work with the Council on Aging to see who needs these grants. Nancy Mills volunteered to help with this. Fifty houses in town have been identified as needing repairs. These houses need to be reviewed to try to identify which of these houses are owned by full time residents.

Member White made a Motion to select Foresight for the engineering work to be done. Member Wheeler seconded. They were the lowest of the three bids received. All in favor. Chair Warner made a request to was made to add a survey of the roadway to determine access and footage. Can be done within the scope of the contract as written.

Next Meeting Scheduled: March 4, 2024 at 4:00

Move to adjourn by Member Warner. Second by Vice Chair Ackerman. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Elisabeth Wheeler, Affordable Housing Trust Fund Committee Member/Secretary

A full meeting of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Committee can be viewed at 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.