

TOWN OF STOCKBRIDGE, MA.
AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND COMMITTEE
IN-PERSON MEETING (CTSB was not able to connect and a sound recording was made).
MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2023 AT 3:00PM

Members in attendance:

Ranne Warner - Chair, Jan Ackerman - Vice-Chair, Mark Mills, Patrick White, McCaela Donovan, Lis Wheeler, and Don Eaton

Non-Members: Town Administer, Micheal Canales

While trying to connect with CTSB TV the AHTFC reviewed the plans for the joint Affordable Housing Trust Fund Committee meeting on the 16th. Member Mills will work on press for it. Each town will post the agenda.

Member Ackerman has sent out three "Requests for Qualifications/Quote for a Housing Production Plan" proposal. RQ's are due by March 17th. The AHTFC members will review them as they come in.

It was determined Member Donovan would record the meeting on her cell phone recorder since the CTSB TV link was still not working.

Chairperson Warner called the meeting to order.

Minutes - Motion to approve the minutes was made by Member Mills, Member Ackerman seconded, all voted in favor.

Discussion of funding requests to the CPC was begun because the CPC has asked the AHTFC to come back with more specific requests for money.

The AHTFC has requested:

\$25,000 for cost of consultants for mechanical, structural and code, for a better sense of the conditions at Pine Woods. Additional architects etc. will be brought on board as needed after the preliminary report. \$100,000 for duck tape/emergency fund. And a request for \$100,000 to add to the AHTFC's account to start the process for new projects.

Town counsel said we cannot use the \$25,000 for consulting unless it generates new housing.

The AHTFC's goal is to work together with the CPC. We are all volunteers working toward the best interests of the town. It was noted that the AHTFC has funds we can access should we get nothing today okayed by the CPC.

Member White stated the Inclusionary Residential bylaw is important with Elm Court having been sold. It would add to the affordable housing fund or offer needed AH units there.

Though the CPC only meets once a year, the AHTFC could approach CPC for emergency funds throughout the year should they not want to place money in our account. It would just take longer to access the funds.

The CPC was one of the first advocates of AH with the Pine Woods community. A solid partnership needs to be established with Construct. It's their job to do the proper inspections required by the town and for Pine Woods upkeep. Their budget is low and the AHTFC is here to help with resources if we can.

Member Eaton suggested asking other groups, "what can we do to make your job easier?"

Chairperson Warner: Focus on the process of communication today. How can CPC and AHTFC work together as town boards?

Our mission statement says the AHTFC is to encourage, support, help facilitate, and preserve that which is here. Of all issues, affordable housing is the most complex. The town's interest includes supporting AH.

Can we address how the town entities are going to work together?

Town Administer, Michael Canales and AHTFC members discussion:

How does the CPC see us? TBD.

If the CPC gives us money that is approved at the town meeting we can use it throughout the year without going to the CPC for each thing we undertake.

The AHTFC is aware we have to meet all the guidelines of the CPC and have it reviewed by town counsel beforehand to make sure we can do what it is we are looking to do. The AHTFC will do its due diligence to make sure it follows regulations.

If the CPC wants to control the money? We would have to call a special town meeting for needed funds if we don't get funds needed. If CPC doesn't trust the Trust we can't do what we were entrusted to do. Alternative: Money could be put in a designated fund for housing.

The AHTFC needs to start building its funds so it can start something years down the road. \$400,000-\$600,000 will be needed to start to take action to build AH. The AHTFC was told there is about \$44,000 available for each of the three categories the CPC funds. \$260,000 is discretionary. Would it be possible for the CPC, if it was willing, to designate \$250,000 to undesignated bucket for the most flexibility for highest best use this year? It could be used for a new roof or money for open space acquisition, etc... The AHTFC could ask the CPC to replenish those funds each year.

There are other potential sources for funding...Should it pass, the Residential Inclusionary Bylaw could add more funding. And the General Fund if money for AH can be put in the budget.

The Town Administrator suggested we request a meeting with AHTFC and CPC after the town meeting. What roles are the two boards going to play in this?

Member Wheeler mentioned that it is important to remember that the funding the AHTFC receives each year from the CPC is necessary for use as leverage for additional funding from State, Federal and other grants. That is what those entities are looking for, without it there is much less of a chance of getting those grants..

Final decision....the AHTFC will ask for \$100,000 for the triage fund. Another \$100,000 will be requested for our existing general funds for use to support future AH options. The AHTFC will withdraw the request for the additional \$25,000.

Note: The AHTFC will have an audit at the end of each year, as will the CPC. The audit is meant to keep everything done within the set regulations.

Member Mills suggested from a practical standpoint it seems to make more sense to transfer money to us so we can do what needs to be done in a timely manner.

Member White reminded members how the AHTFC was established....The townspeople were the authority that voted for the AHTFC; the Selectboard appointed us and that's where our authority came from.

Michael will speak to the CPC first to talk about what we can and cannot do as boards. The AHTFC members who are not well known to the CPC will take the lead at the meeting so CPC members can get to know them too and gain a better understanding and trust in the AHTFC as a whole.

Motion to adjourn by Member Mills. Chairperson Warner seconded. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted by,
Elisabeth Wheeler
Affordable Housing Trust Fund Committee and Planning Board Member

The March 6, 2023 meeting was recorded as a voice recording. As stated above, the CTSB TV link would not connect.