

TOWN OF STOCKBRIDGE, MA.
AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND COMMITTEE
VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON MEETING
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2022 AT 6 PM

Members in attendance:

Ranne Warner, Janet Ackerman, Don Eaton, Lis Wheeler (Online), Patrick White.

Also attending,, Andrea Lindsey (online), Jim Welch (online), McCaela, June Wolfe (on line)

- 1. Call to order
- 4. Approval of minutes of previous meeting – November 9, 2022 Approved
- New Members McCaela, Patrick reached out to others who were interested before
- Special Presentation: June Wolfe from Construct. Education about Affordable Housing in MA
 - Lis will be representing Pine Woods from this committee
- Presentation: Affordable Housing Shortage is growing. Not just a local problem. Who are we talking about? Workforce housing and even above that too.
- Who lives in our affordable housing? Cashiers, teachers, managers...
- Who benefits from affordable housing? Everyone. Did you buy a house when you got out of school? No, you rent or stay with friends and family. When you decide who you want to spend your future with or where you want to be you buy your first house. When you get older, you downsize.
- What happens when things change, loss of a job, domestic violence, etc...
- The town benefits. Young people are producers, they add to the economy, have children and are consumers. They are more likely to put money into businesses in town. Employers in town are looking for people to work and more entrepreneurship. Look at towns with no affordable housing, businesses close or scale back their time open. Monterey has no businesses left. No rentals. Affordable homes are so far from where people work they may not drive to where the employment needs exist.
- Why do people dislike affordable housing? Based on area median income \$92,100 for a family of four (Berkshire County). Different sized families are allotted their numbers based on AMI. LIHTC (Lower Income Housing Tax Credit) Their income and rent limits chart is easiest to use. HUD Limits are harder to use but can be done.
- Rent limits are based on people who are residents and are based on fair market rent. Poverty limit is calculated and limits are published by April.
- Utilities are included in the cost of the rent though paid separately to the providers. Rent-utilities=maximum rent.
- State must see positive cash flow in order to grant building funds. Construct asks for project based vouchers which are attached to the unit. We can charge 110% because the tenant is only paying a third of their income. The housing authority

pays the rest with their vouchers. These vouchers are spread throughout the community in order not to create ghettos. There are few used in each development built now. Construct makes this work by mixing rental percentages ahead of time for each community. To build the budget, they know how many units and can base the budget on rent limits. It is adjusted yearly. Looks at the debt/service ratio.

- Maintenance issues are calculated and adjusted based on the type of property needing work.
- Funding sources are permanent loans that don't have to be paid back unless they make too much money. Some money made can be put into the maintenance of the property.
- Each property has to be their own entity, LLC.
- We have met our Affordable Housing state mandate of 10%. In 2020, we were at 10.8%. Numbers have not been redone since before Covid after the housing boom.
- Stockbridge, GB, Lenox, Egremont have CPA funds and have AHTFC's
- How can we increase housing inventory? Look for underutilized properties, abandoned properties (state has initiative for this), future properties. Receiver explanation.
- Grant money can be used to rehab AH along with a receiver loan.
- Can write deed restriction to ensure property is affordable from a minimum of 30 years or in perpetuity.
- If a multifamily is not up to code it is a candidate for receivership. Builder inspector and health inspector are well versed in this. Holyoke specializes in this. There are very few multi-family homes in Stockbridge. Receivership can be motivating to get repairs done or sell. Receivers are agents to make sure the changes happen. Town asks the board of health or building inspector for a list of properties in need of repair. They know what is in trouble after working with owners. They reach out to AG's office or for a receiver like Construct. Towns/neighbors like it like this because houses are brought back to code, taxes are being paid and there is economic integration.
- Affirmative fair housing plan, includes a lottery. Judges like this since it allows homes to go to those who may not otherwise be able to afford it.
- Taking someone's property is a last resort. Receivership can push people to do the fixes or help them by doing the fixes and letting the owner pay them back for the repairs.
- Stockbridge is in court to take possession of abandoned properties. Consider receivership.
- If we want to increase our AF Housing we must look at zoning. Flex Zoning. Multi-family by Right, Conversion of a Single Family to a Multi-Family. Stockbridge has a zoning law that allows this but has restrictive conditions.
- Boarding houses (GB and Sheffield)
- Education to explain why AH is important to a community.

- Millennial valley. We have some children, we lose the population of 20-40 yr olds, the population goes up from there and declines as people go to assisted living and die.
 - With younger people in the community, we have parents with children and businesses open catering to their needs and desires. They are consumers, producers, parents and volunteers for physical jobs. .
 - Without younger people, a town has no volunteers. Monterey pays their firefighters. Stockbridge allows multi-family development with specific outlines for it with added impediments. I.e: adding more acreage for every unit. It is easier in the RC district. This will be covered in a follow-up conversation with June. There is a lot to cover here. See zoning laws.
- Multi-family zoning has 40B law to cover it if the town hasn't met the 10% AF mandate.
 - Conversion of a Single Family is covered in Stockbridge.

Financing: How do we make this happen?

We can use state funds as a buy in, we have CPA funds and AHTF and we have the authority to move money. If CPA puts money in our AFT we can use the money as needed without going to the town for each project. Berkshire County Housing Coalition is looking into forming a consortium like small towns on the Cape. That money would be from the Fed Gov into the Receivership: The MA Attorney General's office has a program called the Abandoned Housing Initiative.

- CPA: Community Preservation Act
 - AHT: Affordable Housing Trust
 - HOME funds and HOME consortium
 - ARPA fund: American Rescue Program Act
 - Affordable Housing Trust fund
 - CDBG: Community Development Block Grant
 - RSTHI: Rural Small Town Housing Initiative (Construct has been very successful with this)
 - Can it be used for capital maintenance? Yes, try for Pine Woods
- Identify and evaluate the property: consider room for conservation, soil types, is it suitable for the community? Does it work where it is?
 - Funding and funding cycles (takes the longest) MAY not get funded on the first round, more applications than ever but now you are in the cue for funds.
 - Can't start building until all the funding sources have been closed on and restrictions recorded.
 - When building, affirmative plan goes into effect as buildings go up
 - Screen tenants for income limit and so they are not cost burdened. Misconception is only people who can't pay their bills can live in AH, not true.
 - Credit, criminal background and landlord history is checked.
 - All leases are signed before anyone moves in.

Status of Pine Woods:

- Half the driveway was completed and will be back in the Spring to finish the job
- Need boilers, appliances, floors and doors
- Been systematically replacing the original parquet floors and the carpet with engineered flooring. Porch doors were not properly flashed. Subflooring has been replaced as needed as well.
- Overall budget @ \$950,000. CPA gave \$145,000. Applying to other places and continuing to look.
- Capital reserve and operating fund. Capital reserves can be matched by funding sources. Receivership is one way to go. Feasibility test is the best way to start.
- Is there a need to expand Pine Woods? Newer developments are more attractive for tax credits.
- Follow up on seeing Construct's financials
- Let's cultivate a close working relationship June

Jan - report on Williamstown Housing needs. Spoke with Andrew Groff

- Did a housing needs assessment. Cost \$15,000
- Same statistics a housing production plan looks at. Done by the District Local Technical Assistance part of BRPC (Nancy and Christine represent Stockbridge)
- Making a Master Plan for all of Williamstown. Cost @ \$179,000. 11 member committee. Working with Resilience Planning and Design out of VT.
- Population and other statistics is about 4 times the population of Stockbridge

	Williamstown	Stockbridge
Median age	30 (2010)	65 (2020)
Median Income	\$91,000	\$53,000
Pop over 65	21%	Higher here
Housing units	3000	1700
Seasonal	15%	

- College concerned about retirees in the next decade and where will they live and their replacements? Identify rental and condo units. Green River Cottages has 5 which are affordable. Purchasing 3 lots and working with Berkshire Habitat to build more units. College has arranged a long term lease with Cable Mills for a number of units to rent to new faculty and staff. Town is working together with the college.

Ranne reported: Laura Shurfelt, Mass Housing Partnership suggests a housing needs assessment. Ranne spoke to Laura's assistant who suggested Jen Golson (?) planner.

Andrea: \$3000 grant from Laura Shurfelt. Working with the State to see about a home purchase on Park St. Looking into a state grant for more units in the future.

Patrick: Stuart Saginor presented at CDC, Community Preservation Foundation Director. Patrick will talk to Sally about how they will be working with them. June would like to work with CDC by having them give money directly to us so we can use the funds as needed.

Don: Next CDC meetings are Jan 16, 30 and Feb 13th

Next meeting: Ask June to come back to explain zoning at the next meeting, Pine Woods and ask financials and to distribute to everyone. (Lis)

Ask CDC for Jan 30th or Feb 13

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Elisabeth Wheeler, Affordable Housing Trust Fund Committee Member Meeting

A full meeting of the affordable housing trust fund committee can be viewed at [ctsb.tv](https://www.ctsb.tv). Go to government, in the search bar, type in Stockbridge, then look for the date of the meeting you want to listen to.