

TOWN OF STOCKBRIDGE, MA.  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND COMMITTEE  
IN-PERSON MEETING and via Zoom  
MONDAY, APRIL 3, 2023 AT 4:00PM

Members in attendance:

Ranne Warner - Chair, Jan Ackerman - Vice-Chair via Zoom, Mark Mills, Patrick White, McCaela Donovan, Lis Wheeler, Non-Members: Nick Nadorff

Approval of Minutes Member Wheeler, second by Member Mills. Minutes approved by all.  
Motion passed.

Note: Jane Ralph is on vacation. No response from Construct as of yet.

**Member Jan and Member McCaela update on the Housing Production Plan Requests and Quotations**

Three consultants were asked for requests and quotations for a Housing Production Plan for the town of Stockbridge. They heard from Jennifer Goodson who can't meet the time requirements as she is booked. There was no response from Judy Barrett.

However, *a proposal was received from Karen Sunnarborg Consulting*. It is a clear proposal and she has 35 years of experience. It was reported that Town Administrator Canales says the AHTFC can proceed since we sent the letter out to three forms for requests for proposals. Costs total: \$17,250. Well priced. Karen has extensive credentials and understands this town since she lives in Sharon, CT which is similar to Stockbridge. She has also worked in many towns in the Boston and Cape Cod areas. Member Whitemade a motion to proceed with her, Member Wheeler seconded. All voted in favor. Motion passed.

A Subcommittee was formed for the Housing Production Plan. Member Donovan will take notes. Motion made by Member White to form the HPP Committee, Member Mills seconded. All in favor. Motion passed, Member Ackerman, Member Donovan and Town Administrator Canales will try to meet with Karen Sunnarborg in the next ten days to set up a timeline for moving ahead.

If you would like to read about Ms Sunnarborg's proposal and learn about her credentials follow the link below:

[https://stock-mail.townofstockbridge.com/owa/service.svc/s/GetFileAttachment?id=AAMkAGJmNWExYWQ2LTM4NjUtNDYxOC05MWNhLWM4ODZiNzdkNzcxMgBGAAAAAAHIWF9Z1MBSLwoLYb%2bWC2OBwC01UetVwFySZPSeAkCRYZZAAAAAEMAAC01UetVwFySZPSeAkCRYZZAACv7N78AAABEgAQAO2sWWKNJ99EnuCvgQyCiL0%3d&X-OWA-CANARY=Yu\\_6zLWrnkOwUaSIbNH8IP6y9sFBQ9slkv3zuPFCYyLFhj4YI-EpxHI2pwgp\\_on7\\_0zeVYxccxc](https://stock-mail.townofstockbridge.com/owa/service.svc/s/GetFileAttachment?id=AAMkAGJmNWExYWQ2LTM4NjUtNDYxOC05MWNhLWM4ODZiNzdkNzcxMgBGAAAAAAHIWF9Z1MBSLwoLYb%2bWC2OBwC01UetVwFySZPSeAkCRYZZAAAAAEMAAC01UetVwFySZPSeAkCRYZZAACv7N78AAABEgAQAO2sWWKNJ99EnuCvgQyCiL0%3d&X-OWA-CANARY=Yu_6zLWrnkOwUaSIbNH8IP6y9sFBQ9slkv3zuPFCYyLFhj4YI-EpxHI2pwgp_on7_0zeVYxccxc)

**Member Mills' report on the AHTFC joint meeting held on March 16, 2023.**

There were eighteen participants from the five towns in the Berkshires with Affordable Housing Committees. They are Williamstown, Lenox, Gt Barrington, Pittsfield and Stockbridge. Speakers

included Shelly Goehring from the Mass Housing Partnership in Boston via Zoom; Eileen Peltier CEO of the Berkshire Housing Development Corporation (BHDC) and Matthew Kropke, Director of Real Estate Development for BHDC; Jane Ralph, Executive Director of Construct, Inc and Carol Bosco Bauman, Executive Director of the Community Development Corporation of South Berkshire. Refer to Member Mills' email with names and email addresses of those who attended.

*Themes of all the Trusts:* The CPC is their principal source of funding. Towns decide the amount of money to go into the AHT account. It will take time to get things done.

The group feels it is important to bring builders in to speak to us and to develop relationships so we can call on them for information in the future about costs and ideas.

It was suggested we look for partners such as Habitat for Humanity (Central Berkshires group) to talk about housing. Invite them to one of our meetings.

*Williamstown:* Bought three building lots and were contracted to build 3 affordable houses with Habitat. They have a mortgage assistance program. They are working on property tax relief, for qualifying seniors

*Gt Barrington* has a downpayment assistance program, are pushing for ADU's and are developing thirty units of housing on N Plain Rd with the city doing infrastructure (roads, water, sewer). Working with Habitat.

*Lenox* has a first time home buyer program with grants of ten thousand dollars, they have \$50,000 allocated for this.

We can learn from other programs as we proceed.

*Stockbridge* AHTFC Member Donovan is working on the first time homebuyer program but it may not work here now because homes are so expensive in this town but we should still have it in place in case something comes up.

*General Information:* Habitat remodels old homes as well. They are presently working on Grove Street in Great Barrington. Anyone can go on Saturdays to help them with the rehab and/or see what they do.

What else can we do? Look at smaller projects?

\$230.52 was spent on the lunch for the AHTF Committees group meeting for lunch and breakfast. Can it be reimbursed with our funds?? Ranne will find out.

Looking for property for new AH buildings.

### **Conversation with Nick Nadorff**

Nick brought up his concerns about the proposed walkway from Pine Woods to town on the west side of the 102. Will it be brought up at the town meeting? If not, Nick will bring it up. Member White says it will be talked about at the next meeting. Can roll the cost in with the upgrades. Member White will put it on the agenda for the 13th. Nick is available for a brainstorming session with positive ideas. Would like to be a part of planning for the next phase.

Nick had been on an Ad Hoc growth study commission with Terry Flynn. Developed mylar maps for the town that were easy to read but they are not to be found. Ned gave us three maps to work with. Goal is to develop a program to identify properties that can be used for more

development. He suggested the use of LiDAR. It is essentially laser radar to see topographical characteristics of land. It could be used to find placement for ADU's or Affordable Housing.

*Other possibilities for ADU's.* There are large houses/estates with servants quarters. A little history: The houses on Church St were built by families on Prospect Hill and it was known as Poverty Row. The inhabitants could walk to work on Prospect Hill above. These homes took care of the needs of the community.

Valuable parts of Stockbridge are waterfront. If it's approved, the town will dredge the Stockbridge Bowl. Can take the extra town funds, there is about \$13 million available to purchase a dredging machine. Suggestion: What has been dredged can be processed and used as fill. Could make more waterfront. I.e: Lake Agawam (Swann property) Clark Pond, others off Ice Glen., Rte 7. all could be dredged. Could possibly add new land for mixed use or market rate properties that would add to the tax base. Expect 5–20 Years of planning to take this idea to completion.

State owns the Stockbridge Bowl. There used to be swimming on Lake Agawam. It is one of 2 calcareous fens like Kampoosa bog. State will burn off the phragmites. Permitting for the Bowl dredging has been in the works and stalled for the past 15 years. Sewer around the lakes should be completed now that the reasoning behind not doing it years ago is not applicable anymore. Large houses have been built.

People are buying houses as commodities and that has taken away the housing stock for working families. It starts with the land. Building codes are a major part of the affordability issue. Cost of pre construction fees for permits, attorneys etc... Can be \$7000+ before one can break ground. Look at ways to build houses that are affordable. Add in expenses like mortgage, food, insurance etc....Costs need to be cut back with options like solar, home gardens etc...Repurpose materials. It would cut back the expense of everything if we didn't have all these codes. As things are set up now there are so many hurdles and codes that there is no path for an affordable house.

Company named Excel made "Elder cottages" years ago. It can be brought in and placed next to a home and hooks up to main house utilities. There was a National Movement to do this. These homes can be moved in and moved out. Other companies doing this like Den Outdoors are fairly reasonable.

Nick gave the committee maps for review to see all the parcels in town. Very helpful.

Conversation turned to discussion of Construct and who owns the property now. Who has the equity position now? It is unclear. It's under an LLC. Who actually owns it? Was the road at Pine Woods resurfaced properly? Nick suggested concrete would have been more durable and drainage would have been proper for the topography.

The lack of workers here is hard on businesses. Little education available in schools for many trades. Training on a computer at night after working a day job is not producing the numbers of workers we need.

*Ideas:* Paper roads need exceptions from the town, another expense.

Distressed properties should be examined and how can the process be sped up?

Cluster building to keep open space in town.

A study on climate change in Stockbridge suggested cluster housing for utilities being closer together especially if there are major weather events.

Member Wheeler moved to adjourn, Chair Warner seconded, all voted in favor.

NEXT MEETINGS: April 24 and May 22

Respectfully submitted by,

Elisabeth Wheeler

Affordable Housing Trust Fund Committee and Planning Board Member

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