

Cohasset Affordable Housing Trust

Date: Wednesday, March 8, 2023

Time: 8:45AM

Place: Via Zoom

Total Members Present:

Steve Gaumer, Chair
Ted Carr
Cindy Matheison
David Fifer
Tom Meade
Diane Kennedy

Absent:

Rob Henry

Others Present:

Cassandra Thayer, Assistant Town Planner
Michelle Leary, Assistant Town Manager

The Meeting was called to order by Chair Gaumer at 8:45AM. Roll Call Vote: Cindy Matheison - Present, Tom Meade – Present, David Fifer - Present, Ted Carr – Present, Diane Kennedy – Present and Chair Steve Gaumer - Present.

Public Comment

There was none.

Discussion of FY23 goals and updates

Finance Plan – Chair Gaumer

Chair Gaumer stated that the Trust has the capability of investing funds in a variety of ways, and he would like to take advantage of a strong treasury bond market return between 4.5-5%. He asked Select Board Representative Kennedy to assist in obtaining information on the Trust’s balance sheet.

Member Matheison reported that she had met with the CPC with regard to the Trust’s request for additional funds in the amount of \$101 thousand for the purchase and \$50-60 thousand for renovations of the Elm St. project. The CPC voted to approve our request for \$180,000 of the remaining (contingent) \$250,000 approved at Town Meeting in 2022.

Chair Gaumer noted that the grant agreement with the CPC will reflect the Trust’s mission statement on how funds will be deployed. Attorney North will work with town counsel in finalizing the terms of the agreement.

Project Pipeline – Tom Meade

Member Meade reported that the Trust now officially owns Elm St. He arranged to have the leaky furnace serviced. In answer to his question on how to proceed on the RFP process, Ms. Leary responded that as long as a local sole proprietor contractor was hired and the cost was under \$50 thousand, the procurement process was not necessary and therefore the requirement to pay the prevailing wage. Any

cost above \$50 thousand would require the Trust to go out to bid. She suggested contacting MassSave to take advantage of any heating upgrades and to maximize funding opportunities. Member Meade asked for authorization to spend up to \$10 thousand to assess initial issues with the project.

Upon motion duly made by Chair Gaumer and seconded by Member Kennedy, it was voted to authorize the Elm St. subcommittee to spend up to and including \$10 thousand to assess a safe evaluation of the Elm St. project. Roll Call Vote: Cindy Matheison-aye, Tom Meade-aye, David Fifer-aye, Ted Carr-abstain, Diane Kennedy-aye and Chair Steve Gaumer-aye. **Motion passes 5-0-1 with Member Carr abstaining because he is an abutter to the property.**

Member Carr reported that Habitat for Humanity was having its annual gala fundraiser at the Red Lion on May 11th. Part of the proceeds will go toward the 808 Jerusalem Rd. project. The Chair and members stated they would be in attendance.

Discussion ensued on ways that the Trust could support the event, including the pledging of an additional \$5 thousand from the general fund toward a matching campaign to leverage more donations. The use of a paddle in the auction would specify that this portion of the event was to raise funds specifically for the Jerusalem Rd. project and not the general Habitat fund. Select Board Representative cautioned that, while member could “buy a table at the event” as private citizens, the Trust as a public body is bound by state ethics laws. She will check with town counsel and special counsel to ensure that public funds can be used to provide leverage for private donations.

With regard to 147 South Main St., Chair Gaumer noted that the project was subject to three performance events that triggered the release of funds, i.e., permitting, construction initiation and occupancy.

Upon motion duly made by Member Fifer and seconded by Member Carr, it was unanimously voted to authorize Town Planner Thayer and the Town to release payment of funds when necessary. Roll Call Vote: Cindy Matheison-aye, Tom Meade-aye, David Fifer-aye, Ted Carr-aye, Diane Kennedy-aye and Chair Steve Gaumer-aye. **Motion passes 6-0, unanimous.**

Assistant Town Planner Thayer reported that 1 Pleasant St is under construction, and 55 South Main St. is scheduled to go before the Planning Board on March 22nd and before the Affordable Housing Steering Committee on March 14th to present its final proposal.

Chair Gaumer began the discussion on payment-in-lieu-of proposal by the developer of 55 Main St. to fund the 808 Jerusalem Rd. project, and the decision that funding of existing projects would not be an option for this proposal. Select Board Representative Kennedy stated that the zoning bylaw working group is addressing the question from the point of view of equity as this cannot be considered on an individual arbitrary basis. The developer and the community will know the formula for calculating an in-lieu-of-payment. Chair Gaumer noted the average two- and one-half-year process involved in the affordable housing process as a factor for building in payment-in-lieu-of more effectively. He suggested that the Trust could develop a position paper for the Planning Board to outline the Trust’s position on factors to be considered in the definition of payment-in-lieu-of calculations. Chair Gaumer will ask

Attorney North to research data from other towns on best practices. Select Board Representative Kennedy suggested the Chair Gaumer reach out to Tom Callahan, Chair of the Planning Board, to collaborate on the proposed position paper.

Member Meade reported that the real estate agent is awaiting further guidance from the Trust on the listing of Heather Drive. Discussion ensued and it was the consensus of the Trust that, simultaneously with the listing of the property, that abutters be informed.

Upon motion duly made by Member Carr and seconded by Member Matheison, it was unanimously voted to approve a six-month listing with Realtor Fennelly. Roll Call Vote: Cindy Matheison-aye, Tom Meade-aye, David Fifer-aye, Ted Carr-aye, Diane Kennedy-aye and Chair Steve Gaumer-aye. **Motion passes 6-0, unanimous.**

Communication Plan update – Cindy Matheison and David Fifer

Member Fifer reviewed the attached PowerPoint presentation on educating the average resident on what affordable housing means in Cohasset. It is intended that this information will be posted to the Affordable Housing Facebook page for easy access by residents and town department heads in management and recruiting of staff. This information will be updated on a regular basis as new projects are completed and new projects come online and what that means to the community in meeting its 10% available housing stock.

Member Carr noted that there are federal programs to support the housing of emergency and educational personnel in the communities in which they work. Chair Gaumer asked that he have put together information on the process for the Trust's consideration at the next meeting. Discussion ensued on the two-pronged mission of the Trust to meet the meet state law for affordable housing and the need to address issues of quality of life and providing affordable housing to dedicated public servants. Member Matheison referred to the actual federal numbers defining income qualifications relative to current public salaries.

Member Carr began the discussion on communicating with other Town boards and committees on properties that the Trust either owns or is under agreement. It was the consensus of the Trust that communication is necessary to this end. As a public body the Trust must submit a summary of activities for the public in the Town Annual Report, Ms. Thayer will provide a timeline for submission after checking with the Town Clerk's Office.

Member Kennedy left the meeting.

Administrative

Next meeting: April 12, 2023

Approval of Minutes

Member Matheison reported that she and HR Director Kim Roy interviewed two candidates for the position of minute taking with the recommendation of one candidate, who was a remote candidate. She stated that she would bring the Trust up to date on past recorded minutes.

Following discussion, and upon motion duly made by Chair Gaumer and seconded by Member Meade, it was unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Christine Barraford for the position of minute=taker. Roll Call Vote: Cindy Matheison-aye, Tom Meade-aye, David Fifer-aye, Ted Carr-aye and Chair Steve Gaumer-aye. **Motion passes 5-0, unanimous.**

Adjournment

Upon motion duly made by Member Fifer and seconded by Member Meade, it was unanimously voted to adjourn. **Motion passes 5-0, unanimous.**

Roll call vote:

Member Fifer-aye

Member Carr-aye

Member Matheison-aye

Member Henry-aye

Chair Gaumer-aye

The meeting adjourned at 10:16AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Martin Barraford
Recording Secretary