

Cohasset Affordable Housing Trust

Date: Wednesday, March 9, 2022

Time: 8:45 AM

Place: Via Zoom

Total Members Present: Steve Gaumer, Chair
 Ted Carr, Vice Chair
 Rob Henry
 Diane Kennedy
 Cindy Matheison

Others Present: Cindy Amara, AHT Legal Counsel

The Meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Gaumer at 8:50am

Roll Call Vote: Rob Henry - Present, Ted Carr – Present, Cindy Matheison – Present, Steve Gaumer – Present

Others Present: Cindy Amara, AHT Legal Counsel

Planning & Zoning Projects Update

Chair Gaumer began with a summary of conversation with John Hallin, Director of Planning, Permits and Inspections.

1. **Project for One Pleasant Street** – Developer will be submitting an application to Planning Board for building permit for mixed use (retail and residential) construction project on site of existing buildings on Pleasant St (behind Ripley Road). The project envisions 15 total apartment units, in which 3-4 can be deed-restricted, on the west side of the railroad tracks.
2. **147 South Main Street project** – owner John Schiavo has requested a 6-month extension on his 2-year building permit. Chair Gaumer recommends AHT engage with Mr. Schiavo to see what assistance the Trust can offer to keep his project moving forward. We have the capability to do more to help if he needs support such as with additional resources/financing of the project. Chair Gaumer will reach out to AHSC Chair Rob Jeffers to understand the delay in the project and engage with Mr. Schiavo to offer solutions.
3. **390 CJC** - project is working on its punch list before applying for certificate of occupancy. List includes:
 - a. Sewer system hookup – line will be build coming down 3A at owner’s expense which is intended to cover needs of the entire plaza. In the interim, DEP has given approval for the apartments to be treated through septic systems with clear guidelines for regular treatment and pumping.

- b. Water hookup will follow the completion of sewer and septic hookup
- c. Owner to complete necessary site work around the project.

Member Kennedy joined the meeting at 9:08am

AHT Request for Transfer of Land Update

Chair Gaumer made note that AHT was listed on Select Board Agenda for 3/8/2022 for discussion of the potential for land transfer of the 2 properties (39 Mill Lane, 25 Heather Drive) identified by AHSC to the AHT. AHT was not notified they were on the Select Board Agenda so the item will be placed on SB Agenda for 3/15/2022. Chair Gaumer, Vice Chair Carr and Member Matheison will be present.

Discussion that did take place, suggests the Select Board is favorable to transferring Mill Lane for property development through AHT. Select Board is still considering whether transfer of Heather Drive to AHT and subsequent sale of property is the best use of the Town-owned property and that perhaps the funds from sale should be considered for other Town projects?

Member Kennedy commented the SB questions regarding Heather Drive were not related to its sale, but rather to how the money from the sale should be utilized. The question the SB asks is, "What is the highest and best use of the property?" AHT needs to make the case that property transfer to the Trust and subsequent sale, makes the funds quickly available for affordable housing, and therefore may serve the highest and best use.

Discussion continued about the time it would take for the Town itself to sell the property and try to make use of the funds. If the Town sells the property, the proceeds flow to the general fund. At the end of the fiscal year (June 30) Unrestricted Funds are certified. Their disposition is decided by Town Meeting, typically in the autumn following close of the fiscal year, so that specific use of funds could not be determined for approximately eighteen months.

Vice Chair Carr and Attorney Amara noted that the Heather Drive property was taken by the Town because of a tax lien. The property is no longer needed for its original purpose. This is similar to the most recent example set by the Town in transferring the 808 Jerusalem Road property to AHT to make use of its highest and best purpose. Rather than waiting until the next fiscal year, the AHT could make use of the funds from sale of the property as soon as approved by the Town in ATM in spring 2022.

Noting that cash is fungible, Chair Gaumer stated that this infusion of funds into the AHT would mean the Trust may rely less on funding from CPC and can immediately put the funds to use. In turn, CPC monies can be directed to such projects as they and the Town wish to support before the end of the next fiscal year.

Attorney Amara supported this argument. The fact that the property is no longer necessary for general municipal purpose, and that transferring the property to AHT for sale with the proceeds going into the Trust, is the most effective means to return its value to the tax rolls. If transferred and sold through AHT, the value of the sale is not diluted by the additional time it would take for the Town to use the proceeds of sale elsewhere.

Member Henry commented that Select Board and town citizens need to be clear on the use of AHT funds to meet the Affordable Housing requirements under MGL 40B. Chair Gaumer agreed and stated that 40B is the bare minimum requirement – our baseline – for creating actual affordable housing within

the town. It has little to do with how affordable the town is. Member Kennedy agreed that the AHT will continue to make the case to the SB that the highest and best use of money from the sale of Heather Drive is through the AHT. Chair Gaumer requested minutes be drafted and circulated asap toward that goal. He requested all members available to attend and please take part in next week's meeting to demonstrate the clear direction and effectiveness of the AHT.

Side note: Chair Gaumer noted the SB is concerned about a possible State initiative which could dictate a minimum number of affordable housing units connected with transportation hubs. It is unclear what form of regulation or legislation is being considered, but it is clear that Cohasset cannot support land and sewer capacity to serve a number possibly as large as 700 units.

Discussion of CPC meeting 3/7/2022

Member Matheison provided update from CPC meeting – AHT requested \$500,000, CPC members voted to approve allocation of \$500,000 at Town meeting. \$250,000 will be disbursed immediately following approval at Annual Town Meeting. The remaining \$250,000 will be disbursed following project updates from AHT. She commented that some members of the CPC appear to see AHT requests from CPC as transactional in nature – like other specific projects which come before them for funding. Chair Gaumer agreed noting that CPC needs to understand the monies allocated to AHT are part of an overall process, not just discrete transactions. Actual projects are part of the longer effort to create, maintain and expand affordable housing in Cohasset. AHT funds can be used to support projects in unique ways such as subsidy stacking for affordable development or offering construction loan guarantees to speed up the process of making affordable housing units available. These uses are not necessarily identified with specific projects and require a significant Trust balance to make them effective. We will go back to the CPC with a demonstrated need for the second half of the funding.

Discussion of FY 2023 Goals & updates

Project Pipeline: Member Henry gave a synopsis of the structure and items on the project pipeline suggested by Member Meade (not present).

Communication Plan: Member Matheison gave an overview of a draft outline for communication plan. Keeping in mind the overall mission of the AHT and its goals and objectives for 2023, the outline first considers *general* information we would like all citizens to understand about how the AHT works, how it is funded and asks how we can best communicate the uniquely effective nature of the Trust to all parties. Second, it looks at *specific* audiences to reach, what information details to share, what are effective channels to use and how frequently. The specific audiences to reach include stakeholders such as town boards, individual citizens and participants at Town Meetings, potential developers, financial institutions, state and local organization, state elected officials, and identified local landowners. Last, the communication plan should include a *feedback* mechanism to incorporate responses/questions from stakeholders to the AHT to maintain a coherent, transparent and ongoing cycle of information.

Chair Gaumer stated the **overall success of the AHT will be built on its ability to communicate** its effectiveness in creating, maintaining and expanding affordable housing. Communication is critical to effective functioning within the Town. Member Henry added a PR/marketing program needs to be established to help inform the Town and other stakeholders on what the AHT is doing on a regular basis. Member Matheison and Vice Chair Carr will continue to develop the communication plan. Attorney

Amara suggested drafts be sent to her. She can review and add suggestions, and send out to all Trust Members for their feedback in order to incorporate ideas into the communication plan.

Financing Plan: In the interests of time, Chair Gaumer suggested deferring this discussion to next meeting.

Votes Taken: Chair Gaumer noted the work Attorney Amara has done for the AHT in reviewing the 2 identified town parcels as standard tax lien acquisitions. These can be treated the same as the transfer of 808 Jerusalem property. Since the Right of Redemption is all in order, the Town can move to transfer the parcels at Town Meeting without additional votes from the Select Board. Chair Gaumer asked for a motion to approve payment of February invoice from MHTL law firm. Motions made by Vice Chair Ted Carr, seconded by Member Rob Henry. Roll call vote: Rob Henry – Aye, Ted Carr – Aye, Cindy Matheison – Aye, Steve Gaumer – Aye. Motion carries 4-0.

Administrative

Chair Gaumer confirmed next meeting date April 13 at 8:45am.

Member Kennedy left the meeting earlier (9:45am),

Motion to Adjourn Meeting at 10:05 by Vice Chair Carr, Seconded by Member Henry

Roll call vote: Rob Henry – Aye, Ted Carr – Aye, Cindy Matheison – Aye, Steve Gaumer – Aye.

Motion carries – 4-0