

Cohasset Affordable Housing Trust

Date: Wednesday, April 12, 2023

Time: 8:46AM

Place: Via Zoom

Total Members Present:

Steve Gaumer, Chair
Ted Carr
Cindy Matheison
David Fifer
Tom Meade
Rob Henry

Absent:

Diane Kennedy

Others Present:

Cassandra Thayer, Assistant Town Planner
Paul Kierce, Chair, Affordable Housing Steering Committee

The Meeting was called to order by Chair Gaumer at 8:46AM. Roll Call Vote: Cindy Matheison - Present, Tom Meade – Present, David Fifer - Present, Ted Carr – Present, Rob Henry – Present and Chair Steve Gaumer - Present.

Public Comment

There was none.

Discussion of Inclusionary Bylaw Draft

Chair Gaumer reported that he had disseminated a copy of the draft inclusionary bylaw to members for the purpose of providing comments on the bylaw with respect to the provisions on zoning with respect to on-site housing, off-site housing and payment-in-lieu-of. The latter provision is of particular interest to the Trust as it would provide the opportunity for the Trust to fund development of larger parcels in Town, thereby creating more units. He has requested the Trust attorney to review the bylaw as well as provide input on what other towns had done. The bylaw amendment will not be presented at this year’s annual town meeting, providing time for members and the attorney to review.

Discussion ensued. Paul Kierce, Chair of the Affordable Housing Steering Committee, stated that the Steering Committee would provide comments on the positive and negative aspects of the bylaw, as one transaction is in place and a second is forthcoming. Member Henry commented that a discussion with the attorney was necessary to provide a clear understanding in layman’s terms of the implications of the bylaw and a well-defined understanding of best practices of other communities. Chair Gaumer noted the importance of understanding the mechanisms of integrating affordable housing as it relates to state law.

Chair Gaumer stated that he will ask the attorney to review the draft bylaw as discussed above and send her written opinion to the Chair for dissemination in time for the discussion and review at its next

meeting on May 10th. He asked members to review the bylaw from the perspective of the objectives proposed in the draft in line with what is most important to the mission of the Trust.

Project Pipeline

Member Meade reported that he is in the process of scheduling an initial contractor walk-through of Elm St. project to determine budget and scope of work. He is considering two experienced and reputable contractors. He anticipates having scope of work and rough budget by the next meeting in May.

Affordable Housing Steering Committee Update

Chair Kierce reported that a public forum sponsored by the Habitat for Humanity was held on Monday night regarding 808 Jerusalem Rd. It was a very positive meeting with the abutters present, a young couple with Town roots. Chair Gaumer stated that the Trust was not informed of the meeting and suggested that better communication be pursued with Habitat.

Mr. Kierce reported that Habitat's annual gala fundraiser was scheduled for May 11th. One section of the event will provide an opportunity for direct donations to the Jerusalem project. Member Carr will send a link to members to register for the event. He and his wife donated use of their Lake Winnepesaukee home as a live auction item. Mr. Kierce noted that the event is being promoted across Town. The project is the first transaction that the Steering Committee will have brought to completion from the transfer of land to the Trust, the building and selling of a home for affordable housing.

The Chief Justice Cushing Highway project is fully operational with the first five units of ten being occupied and counted as 10% affordable housing units.

One Pleasant St. will dedicate fourteen units of affordable housing and the project is anticipated to be completed within the calendar year.

The 147 South Main St. project contains two retail units on the bottom floor and three apartments on the second floor. Although not required, the developer has donated one unit as affordable housing and will be seeking assistance from the Trust on completing the process with the state.

The project on North Main St. is no longer viable.

55 South Main St. is scheduled to go before the Planning Board for final approval. The developer has decided to build twelve units and fund two units off-site rather than on-site. If the units are condominiums, the Trust will receive credit for two affordable housing units. If apartments are built on site, the credit is for all twelve units, but if off-site credit is determined for two units. Member Carr suggested that a Trust member attend the Planning Board tonight and advocate for more aggressive rules requiring the developer to fund units on-site.

Discussion ensued on the responsibility of the Trust in the maintenance of the land and keeping the grass trimmed on the Jerusalem Rd. project. Ms. Thayer confirmed that the property had been officially

transferred to Habitat. Mr. Kierce reported that the land is well-maintained and expressed confidence that the Habitat will continue to keep it well-maintained.

Communication Execution

Chair Gaumer referenced the letter he received and disseminated to members from Christopher Davis as representative of the Heather Drive abutters, expressing frustration that the Trust did not make good on its promise to alert the abutters on Heather Drive, and specifically Mr. Davis as their default spokesman, when the property would be listed for sale. Chair Gaumer confirmed that this was not done and there was no follow-up to ensure that the notification was done. He stated, “there was no excuse for that other than the Chairman offering apologies and doing so with humility.” He stated that while there has been activity on viewing the property, there are currently no offers.

Chair Gaumer stated that the Trust needs to “do a better job on follow through” in keeping with execution of communication. Discussion ensued. Member Matheison stated that she was “aghast” to confirm in the minutes that the Trust had in fact promised to communicate with the abutters, and as the lead of the development of a communication plan, “her heart sank” on “dropping the ball.” Chair Gaumer stated that, while not a legal obligation, the Trust had agreed for the purpose of better communication and sustaining good relations within the community to promote the need for affordable housing.

Mr. Davis affirmed that the Trust is under no obligation to advise abutters of listing of the property and expressed appreciation for the Chair’s comments. He referenced the abutters’ letter that asked for a response from the Trust as it related to the 30b process for the disposal of public property. The concern specifically was that the Trust was liquidating its inventory as quickly as possible without any appreciation for the true value of the property. In response to his question if the Trust had sought counsel, Chair Gaumer stated that the Trust relied on the guidance of counsel before listing the property and that the Trust intends to proceed within the confines of the law as it applies to the Trust and likewise in a manner in which the “community can be proud.” In answer to Mr. Davis’ question on the Trust response to the letter, Chair Gaumer stated that the response has not yet been drafted.

Member Meade stated that the conversation be limited to the discussion on communication and any other conversation with regard to the value of the property should be limited to discussion in executive session.

Chair Gaumer asked that an agenda item at the next meeting include input from the communication subcommittee on execution of the communication plan. Member Matheison suggested that she will work with Ms. Thayer on updating information on the website that is accurate and reliable on the progress of existing projects. Member Fifer stated that he will devote more time to working on the communication subcommittee to provide readily available information through various social media channels to residents.

Administrative

Next Meeting: May 10th

Chair Gaumer suggested the agenda items of inclusionary zoning bylaw and communication plan.

Approval of Minutes

January 19, 2022, April 13, 2022, July 13, 2022, August 10, 2022, September 30, 2022, October 12, 2022, December 9, 2022, January 18, 2023, February 6, 2023, and March 8, 2023

Member Matheison presented the minutes of meetings from January 2022 to March 2023 and suggested various amendments.

Following discussion, and upon motion duly made by Member Matheison and seconded by Member Fifer, it was unanimously voted to approve as amended the monthly minutes of meetings from January 2022 to February 2023 as above stated. Roll Call Vote: Cindy Matheison - aye, Tom Meade – aye, David Fifer - aye, Ted Carr – aye, Rob Henry – aye and Chair Steve Gaumer - aye. **Motion passed 6-0, unanimous.**

The minutes of March 8, 2023, will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Approval of Invoice

Upon motion duly made by Member Matheison and seconded by Member Carr, it was unanimously voted to approve the payment of the invoice from Ms. Barraford in the amount of \$800.00 for minute taking services. Roll Call Vote: Cindy Matheison - aye, Tom Meade – aye, David Fifer - aye, Ted Carr – aye, Rob Henry – aye and Chair Steve Gaumer - aye. **Motion passed 6-0, unanimous.**

Chair Comments

Chair Gaumer announced that Member Meade had regrettably announced that he will not seek re-appointment to the Trust at the end of his term in June. While Chair Gaumer stated it was sad to lose him, the Trust “is better because of your participation.”

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Adjourn to Executive Session

To enter into Executive Session under MGL .30A, Section 21 for permissible reason #6: to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the Chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.

Roll call vote:

Member Carr-aye

Member Fifer-aye

Member Meade-aye

Member Matheison-aye

Member Henry-aye

Chair Gaumer-aye

The meeting adjourned at 9:57AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Martin Barraford
Recording Secretary