

Newburyport Affordable Housing Trust Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023
Meeting Location: Mayor's Conference Room
Members in Attendance: Co-Chair Susanne Cameron, Co-Chair Madeline Nash, Robert Currier, Karen Weiner, Andrew Shapiro
Staff Present: Katelyn Sullivan, Planner, Andy Port, Planning Director
Members of the public: Richard Lodge

Newburyport Affordable Housing Trust (Trust or AHT) Co-Chair Madeline Nash called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. There were no public comments. Trust members introduced themselves to new Trust member Andrew Shapiro and spoke about their interest in and experience with creating and advocating for affordable housing. Shapiro introduced himself and relayed his interest in and experience with creating affordable housing to the group. Shapiro is currently the Assistant Town Manager and Director of Community and Economic Development for the Town of North Andover.

Nash updated the group that representatives for MINCO were not going to be able to attend the meeting and that we would need to be reschedule the conversation regarding the 3 Boston Way Affordable Housing Restriction (AHR). Nash asked the group if they had time to look over the AHR and wanted to bring up a few items that she noticed when reviewing the document. Nash and the group asked about the rent calculation and Nash mentioned that it was verified by the Planning Office earlier in the day. The affordable rents were per the Smart Growth Ordinance and adjustments to the maximum monthly rent are to be calculated at thirty percent (30%) of eighty percent (80%) of AMI. The rent is to include parking and utilities. Nash mentioned that the AHR notes a utility allowance and wants to get clarification from MINCO as to what that includes and how much the allowance is for. Katelyn Sullivan from the Planning Office communicated to the Trust members that she reached out to the MINCO team about parking included in the rent. Sullivan reported that MINCO said that each unit is assigned a parking spot which is by default an outdoor space that is free. If a tenant/unit requests a garage parking space for their assigned spot instead of surface parking, then they will pay \$100 extra per month. If that same tenant/unit has a second car that they want to park at the building it will be an additional \$50 per month to park the second car in an assigned outdoor space or an additional \$100 per month to have a second car in the garage.

The Trust members discussed asking MINCO to consider ways to deepen the affordability of the units such as lowering the allowable AMI for several units. The Trust also considered subsidizing the rent for a number of years for tenants. The Trust asked Sullivan to write MINCO seeking to have 50% of the affordable units at 3 Boston Way have rent calculated at 30% of 60% AMI to deepen the level of affordability.

Co-Chair Susanne Cameron gave an update on the Housing Production Plan (HPP) process. The HPP update process will be run by the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) who is also updating all other cities/towns' HPPs in the Merrimack Valley. A Municipal Stakeholder Committee has been formed consisting of members of the Mayor's Office, Planning Office, City Council, Newburyport Housing Authority and the Pettengill House. Co-Chair Susanne Cameron will be the AHT liaison. The role of the Stakeholder Committee is to guide and inform the HPP update process, and ultimately create goals and strategies to advance community-centered housing production across the community and region. The

first Stakeholder meeting was on 2/6. This initial Stakeholder Committee meeting aimed to achieve three objectives:

- 1) Introduce the HPP process to the group;
- 2) Discuss existing housing production goals and strategies from the previous iteration of the plan; and
- 3) Identify priority outreach areas/populations to inform public engagement

Cameron also updated the Trust that Co-Chairs Susanne Cameron and Madeline Nash presented to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) on 2/2 the details of the Trust application to the CPC for a new First-Time Homebuyers Program. The CPC deliberations meeting and votes to recommend funding to the City Council will be on 3/2 at 7pm via Zoom.

Trust member Karen Weiner provided the Trust with an update from the Brown School Ad Hoc Committee. Weiner said that a Request for Information (RFI) is being drafted by Planning Director Andy Port. The Planning Office is putting together a spreadsheet of firms/contact info for any developers/non-profit partners to reach out to directly with a copy of the forthcoming RFI. Trust members planned to send Sullivan names of any/all reasonably adaptive reuse partners (with decent track records).

Trust member Robert Currier read a letter to the Trust that he has sent to several City administrators and councilors regarding a municipal tax on Short Term Rentals Units (STRUs). Currier proposed that the tax would generate income that could be used to develop and building affordable housing in the city. Currier read the positive responses that he has been receiving from others about his idea. Trust members appreciated the update from Currier.

Members of Trust and Planning Office discussed the upcoming meeting schedule for the year. Sullivan said she would put together a master schedule with Trust meetings, HPP meetings with MVPC and Brown School Ad Hoc meetings. The general consensus was that the Trust would move towards meeting quarterly and as needed while the HPP update process was occurring to be efficient with everyone's night meeting commitments.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.