

Final Minutes
Affordable Housing Commission – Monthly Meeting
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2015 – 7:00 P.M.

Charlestown Town Hall, Annex Conference Room, 4540 South County Trail, Charlestown, Rhode Island

1. CALL TO ORDER. Meeting called to order by Chairman Evelyn Smith at 7:07 PM.

2. ROLL CALL. Chairman Evelyn Smith, Vice Chair Sean White, Secretary Sandra Puchalski, AHC members Ernest Morreira and Brian McDonald, and Town Council Liaison Tom Gentz.

3. MINUTES. Members received and reviewed draft minutes of the September 24, 2015, Special Meeting. Ernest made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Brian seconded and all voted in approval. Motion carried.

4. COMMUNICATIONS. Communications Report. Evelyn gave an oral report on communications and documents received since September 24, 2015. She noted a series of communications between Sept 24 and October 2, regarding the 2016 QAP. She also provided copies of a "Sign on Letter in Support of \$100M Affordable Housing Bond" dated October 26, 2015. The letter came by email from Geoff Marchant, and was generated by Melina Lodge, Director of Programs for the Housing Network of R.I. She also noted an email communication from the Town Clerk's office asking for a schedule of our meeting dates for 2016, and various newspaper and updates from AHC Member Ernest for information purposes on related AHC issues.

5. STAFF REPORTS on current Affordable Housing issues. No staff reports.

6. REPORT, TOWN COUNCIL LIAISON. Tom reported that they will probably put the 100M Affordable Housing Sign on Letter on their agenda for November. Tom also reported that ChurchWoods is progressing and CRMC and DEM are approved and ok and that it is pretty straightforward. He is aware of 9 people who have expressed an interest in the units so far. The Laundromat building is scheduled to be torn down soon. Tom also provided a letter dated November 17, 2015, from WCCDC, and asked that it be set down for discussion at a later meeting.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

a) Request for support of sign-on letter. AHC members discussed the letter that the Commission has received, prepared by the Housing Network of Rhode Island, urging the Governor to consider a \$100 Million affordable housing bond in her budget proposal. The Town has been asked to sign on to the letter. Members discussed this and feel that if the Town Council wants to ask us for a recommendation after they discuss, that would be appropriate. Members discussed interest in getting bond money for our town and how to approach that to benefit our rural area because we may not have any other funding. Members agreed and we can keep current with this bond. Members agreed it is difficult for us to get our fair share of the funding, so we need to keep current and proactive in this regard. Evelyn suggested inviting Melina to further explain the sign-on letter if necessary. She lives in Charlestown and is a former member of both the AHC and the Planning Commission.

b) Commission Goals 2016. AHC members considered suggestions for Goals for 2016 and discussed priorities:

Working on the model of an Affordable Housing Land Trust for Charlestown. Members discussed modes of funding, including possibly a use of the transfer tax, to build up funds to assist in Affordable Housing. Having a reliable source of LMIH funding for our community is clearly a goal and priority.

Members discussed the present zoning of the Income-Restricted Accessory Apartment and its need to be amended with regard to the mechanics to make it work, including the property tax relief cited in the Zoning ordinance.

Staying abreast of modifications to the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission has already provided suggestions to the Planning Commission, and members members agreed we need to address the "growth centers" and have discussions with the consultants and the Planning Commission to assure that the Growth Center planning adequately supports the qualities that allow the non-profit CDC's to succeed in competitive LMIH funding applications.

Members discussed ChurchWoods development and that as it is an ongoing project, we should remain informed and stay prepared to support the project at future Planning permit hearings and to address resident priority goals to the fullest extent possible.

Members also discussed the Shannock Falls application and the importance of its success in its quest for funding. The Town of Charlestown has signed on to the guarantee on this at \$80,000.00.

Evelyn brought up an Educational component as a priority for us to consider and discuss. She noted she gets phone calls as Chairperson and other members do too. Rumors start to circulate and this would be a proactive way to deal with our work and get the proper information out to our community. AHC members considered Open House Information Sessions, newsletters, etc. Meetings with Economic Improvement Commission, etc. Brian thought a sign might be a good idea for the latest project of ChurchWoods. Members agreed. It was agreed that the education and information component be project based to keep community informed about local Affordable Housing Projects. We should consider an inaugural article to address this as one of our priorities.

8. OLD BUSINESS

a) Proposed Rhode Island 2016 Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP). AHC members went over this earlier in meeting during the communications report and the various communications during the comment period of QAP. The RIH public hearing was held on October 2, 2015. Evelyn noted in the next couple of weeks we should have the QAP available online and can review and discuss the final version. At that time, we can see if any of our recommendations were considered.

b) Comprehensive Plan Review Status Report. No reports.

c) Income-Restricted Accessory Dwelling Units. Deferred.

d) Commissioners' Liaison Reports. AHC members discussed this and saw no need for specific liaisons. It will be on an "as needed" basis for future reference. When necessary an AHC member can be assigned at that time.

e) Special Projects List/Commission Assignments . During this time of the meeting, any Commissioner may propose or volunteer for independent research topics, data or document compilations, or draft documents that advance the work being undertaken by the Commission. Any Commissioner may volunteer to undertake any special project not already assigned. At this time, there were none to report.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT. None.

10. NEXT MEETING. The next regular monthly meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. As requested, AHC members went over the 2016 schedule to provide to Town Clerk. AHC members agreed 3rd Thursday is fine and went over meetings for 2016. Regular meetings were proposed for Jan 21, Feb 25, March 17, April 21, May 19, June 16, July 21, August 18, September 15, October 20, November 17 and December 15. (Note, the only meeting to be recognized as not the 3rd Thursday occurs in February and it will be the 4th Thursday.)

11. ADJOURNMENT. With no other business to discuss, motion made by Brian and seconded by Ernest to adjourn. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra K. Puchalski, Secretary

Approved as amended at the December 17, 2015, meeting of the Affordable Housing Commission.