

**Draft minutes**  
**Affordable Housing Commission – Monthly Meeting**  
**THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 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 at 7:05 PM and Chairman noted 6 voting members present.
- 2. ROLL CALL.** Chair, Evelyn Smith, Vice Chair, Sean White, Secretary, Sandra Puchalski, AHC members, Ernest Morreira, Faith LaBossiere & Brian McDonald, Town Council liaison Tom Gentz.
- 3. MINUTES.** Draft minutes of March meeting were distributed and reviewed. Ernest made motion to accept minutes as presented. Sean seconded. Faith abstained because she was not present. Motion carried.
- 4. COMMUNICATIONS.** Communications Report. No communications report.
- 5. STAFF REPORTS on current Affordable Housing issues.** No staff reports.
- 6. REPORT, TOWN COUNCIL LIAISON.** Tom reported that the Town has purchased 2 trailers with CDBG funds. Tom reported the Town of Charlestown will own the trailer for 30 years. It is a lien and the tenant pays the land lease and insurance. Tenant lives there mortgage free. Cost for trailer was \$45K and one needs new septic of \$15K. Hopefully this is something that will repeat. Brain thought it would be good to have a press release on this. Tom reported on Shannock Village cottages and there is a slight setback with DEM wetlands. Next month we will know more on Churchwoods. Tom reported that the Disaster Relief funds expire in September 2017.

**7. NEW BUSINESS:**

**a) Charlestown Comprehensive Plan.** Evelyn noted we need to finish up with the discussion of the Affordable Housing Strategy Review as initially proposed in the Housing and Demographics Element (2013 Draft 4, pages 18-26) of the 2013 Charlestown Comprehensive Plan Update, including preliminary recommendations for consideration during the ongoing Comprehensive Plan revision process. AHC members reviewed this together. Ernest noted that the program analysis component is missing.

Evelyn passed out Affordable Housing commission : Draft comments. We previously discussed Strategy 1 & 2 which was reflected in the minutes. AHC members went over previous discussion noted in red on the draft comments document. Noted under Strategy 1: Adopting a Land Trust Model- Status & Conclusions: Comments. It was noted to include mention of successful partnership with SCH4H and Church CH at Edwards Lane, utilizing their existing land trusts with modifications to protect Town's financial investment with a recommendation of: Continue to partner with existing land trusts. Encourage the creation of an AH land trust designed to promote private investment in LIH rental units (perhaps on a regional or statewide basis." Under Strategy 2: Adopt Inclusionary Zoning. (Status & Conclusions: Comments) Design to maintain LMIH unit levels when new housing units are proposed. Most recent draft proposed 15% for major subdivisions only. This does not take minor subdivisions into consideration. (Recommendations) Consider mandatory inclusionary zoning for all subdivisions and land development projects, at minimum of 10% of new units, with pro-rated fee –in-lieu going to dedicated Affordable Housing Trust Fund. A new Strategy 9 was established being: Establish an Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Regarding Housing Policy #2. Meet the state requirement of assuring that 10% of housing units are affordable for people of low and moderate income. It was noted that "people" is not the appropriate term- use "households." New discussion began at Strategy #3. Pursue proactive new construction through an affordable housing overlay district and/or amend mixed-use zoning.

Tom noted that on Policy 8 that the Town Administrator has met with Representatives from Boston/ HUD on counting the Tribal units, however, Tom explained that the Tribe does not recognize the Town of Charlestown. Members continued discussion on Strategy 3. It was noted that not a single construction has been built and it doesn't make any sense on a lot by lot basis. Faith noted it would be financially feasible if the community can be pro-active and reach out in the mixed use zone. There is potential there. We need to repurpose existing structures. It was noted that the mixed-use zoning has not resulted in new affordable

housing units as of yet. It needs to be revitalized. Ernest noted the consultant will have to use word smithery. It was noted that it needs tinkering. It was noted as a recommendation that AH should be a key part of a strategic plan for all growth centers. Ernest noted we need to mention Churchwoods and Shannock Villages. Recommendation also to repurpose existing structures and adding flexibility to the mixed-use statute. Discussion on Strategy 4: Implement a Developer request for proposal (RFP) process. It was noted there is one PDD (Planned Development District) in Charlestown. PDD is not a working option because we have only one parcel. This strategy should gravitate towards Strategy 9. It was discussed that we need new regulations for Planned Unit Development Regulations.

Sandra noted time. Motion to extend to 9PM. Brian seconded. Motion carried.

Strategy 5 discussion on Accessory Apartments. It was noted that the zoning ordinance needs some fixes and tax reduction needs to be implemented. Under comments: No successful application for income restricted accessory units. Under recommendation: 30 year deed restriction – we need to explore statutory solution for that. Perhaps an opt-in program would work. Strategy 6: Adaptive re-use/location specific projects. Projects were noted. We can identify parcels as an example. We can use Churchwoods, Shannock Village Cottages, Edwards Lane, CDBG HUD Trailer replacements- these are the known projects. Discussion to facilitate new proposals thru an Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Evelyn noted the time and on Strategy 7 & 8 members can take a look and send me any comments and I will compile the notes and send them in summary to the Planner and Nancy Letendre. All agreed. Evelyn noted she will compile the notes in a week and report to the Planner.

**b) Municipal Subsidy Ordinance.** Evelyn noted this is continued from March; draft recommendations to the Town Planner/Planning Commission. Evelyn reported she has not sat down with planner as of yet. Members discussed. In order to be clear on what the rules are, we need to have the municipal subsidy program. Evelyn noted steps to this process. Step `1- Letter of eligibility. Responsible party- Town Planner. If nothing is required and applicant just needs Building Official approval and there is no Special Use Zoning review required, then Building Official is responsible party. If it is a land development project then it would go to Planning Department. If there is a subsidy involved in the form of a waiver, it would have to to Town Council for Bond funding. If there are any subsidies, you have to sign and comply with the Municipal Subsidy agreement. Evelyn will put together into a memo and send to Planner with our suggestions.

## **8. OLD BUSINESS**

**a) Income-Restricted Accessory Dwelling Units.** Continued to May, further discussion of zoning and tax ordinance needs, mortgage impact, deed restriction and related issues.

**b) Commissioners' Liaison Reports.** Review of Commission liaison assignments. None.

**c) Special Projects List/Commission Assignments** and progress reports not requiring Commission action. None. 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.

**9. PUBLIC COMMENT.** None.

**10. NEXT MEETING.** It was noted that the next regular monthly meeting is scheduled for May 21, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. Members discussed changing the meeting to May 28<sup>th</sup> instead. Everyone agreed we will meet on the 28<sup>th</sup> vs the 21<sup>st</sup> in May.

**11. ADJOURNMENT.** Motion made and seconded to adjourn. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Karasuk Puchalski, Secretary