

FINAL MINUTES
Affordable Housing Commission – Monthly Meeting
THURSDAY, November 17, 2016 – 7:00 P.M.

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

1. CALL TO ORDER. Chairman Evelyn Smith called the meeting to order at 7:16 PM.

2. ROLL CALL. Chairman Evelyn Smith, Vice Chair- Sean White, Recording Secretary- Sandra Karasuk Puchalski, AHC member Ernest Morreira.

3. MINUTES. Approval of minutes: September 15, 2016, Regular meeting. Copies of minutes were distributed and members reviewed. Evelyn reported that the July and August minutes are ready to be sent along to the Town Clerk with amendments. Upon review and reading of minutes, motion made by Ernest and seconded by Sean to approve minutes of September 15, 2016 as presented. All voted in favor of motion. Motion carried.

4. COMMUNICATIONS. Communications Report. Evelyn noted that there were several emails from Ernest that have been shared with members on local newspaper articles regarding the construction of ChurchWoods. An email from Tom Gentz that he would not be attending meeting after new elections. Evelyn shared an email from WCCDC regarding ChurchWoods and its application process. Members looked over the emails. Also reviewed was an email from Robert Malin a candidate running for local Town Council and we will go over some of these later in meeting under update on ChurchWoods, 7 (d). Evelyn noted that regarding ChurchWoods, there is the brochure that is available at Town Hall prepared by Michele – Town Administrator’s Secretary who had prepared the pamphlet for the groundbreaking. It is a two page document. Members reviewed. Evelyn noted we will go over in 7(B).

5. STAFF REPORTS on current Affordable Housing issues. Evelyn reported that she had brief discussion with Town Planner, Jane Weidman at the Monday night Town Council Meeting regarding status of Comprehensive Plan re-write. Jane noted that consultants are not producing the final edits. The problem seems to be with the Land Use element. The Planning Commission wanted to tweak the first draft and apparently they are not producing the documents to be tweaked and project has fallen behind. Evelyn noted the law requires the Planning Commission provide the final draft and then have a public hearing and then it goes to the Town Council and then another Public Hearing and then it goes to State of Rhode Island for review and acceptance.

6. REPORT, TOWN COUNCIL LIAISON. None- Tom sent email as he is no longer on Town Council and not the Liaison.

7. NEW BUSINESS.

a) Resolution of Appreciation for outgoing Town Council Liaison and Town Councilor. Evelyn noted we did not get a chance to say goodbye and thank you to Tom Gentz for his service on AHC. A card was passed out and signed by all. Evelyn reported that at the Town Council Meeting the State Representatives Elaine Morgan presented a Certificate of Appreciation from the US Senate and the State House for George Trembley and Tom Gentz. Evelyn also thanked Tom and George for their service on AHC over the last few years and commended them for helping to bridge the gap on Affordable Housing in our community. Evelyn noted she would entertain a motion to thank outgoing Town Council Liaison Tom Gentz. Sandra made this motion and Ernest seconded and all voted in favor of motion. Motion carried.

b) Educational Sessions for Elected and Appointed Officials. Evelyn noted that we are subject to Open Meetings Law requirements and not ethics law. The reason for this is we are advisory in nature and that the educational sessions are geared to appointed officials.

c) Shannock Village Cottages Update. Evelyn reported that she talked to Gerry Bertrand and Geoffrey Marchant this week and they are preparing the application documents for the tax credits presently. The project had electric heat and electric heat is not the best and they have since modified their application for state grants for solar power and to generate the energy necessary. Evelyn noted that the next thing we will wait to see is if the Tax Credits based on the application were successful or not for the grant \$ for solar power options and they should know in January.

d) ChurchWoods Update. It was noted that we will first want to put out any fires of misinformation at the Charlestown Senior Community Center and around town after the elections and whatever misinformation that is out in the community.

Evelyn passed out a copy of the sign on the property for AHC members to review. The Owner is ChurchWoods LLC. It was noted we should begin to speak of owners and developers and that for info, the public or interested parties can call WCCDC at 667-7185 (401).

Evelyn next passed out the Westerly Sun article from October 20th which incorrectly stated that the buildings at ChurchWoods would be ready for occupancy as early as January, 2017. In reality, the buildings will not be ready for occupancy until fall of 2017.

Evelyn also passed out the Bob Malin document that has led to some misunderstandings with regard to "applications" being currently accepted and placed on a waiting list. He was running for Town Council and met with the Senior Citizens Commission at their request. Members reviewed the statement that he wrote following his meeting with the Senior Commission, which also appeared on the Democratic Town Committee Website. Basing his information in part on a preliminary story that was posted on the CCA website in June of 2015, he quoted from that source that the project "targeted" Charlestown residents. Based on HUD Fair Housing constraints, we know that this is not the case, although there may be some measure of priority for some Charlestown residents. The income ranges that he mentioned were also inaccurate.

Members discussed clearing the air and accurately getting the word out to the community on ChurchWoods. Evelyn said she will go to the Senior Citizens Commission meeting on November 28th and clear up this information. Evelyn noted that after that meeting it would be her suggestion to write a brief informational narrative on ChurchWoods that would go into the Senior Center newsletter. It was agreed that Ernest would call Michelle at the Charlestown Community Senior Center and work towards that goal and Ernest will work on the paragraph as well. What we want the community to know is that they haven't missed anything and that there will be more information coming out on the project.

Evelyn noted that the Town Council also needs to understand this, perhaps for its December meeting as the new Town Council. If we are able to clarify some things for the community regarding ChurchWoods, and have the Council understand that the application process won't begin until March, they can let community know, etc.

With that discussion, Evelyn noted she would entertain a motion to authorize her as Chair to draft a briefing on ChurchWoods for the Town Council. Sandra made a motion to authorize the Chair to draft a briefing on the ChurchWoods Project for the Town Council December 12th meeting. Ernest seconded. All voted in favor of motion. Motion carried.

e) Commission Goal #2. Evelyn passed out a copy of a generic Senior Housing Tenant Application Form and AHC members went over it. Preferences were discussed. It was discussed that based on the point system, Hurricane prone residents in Flood Zone presently living in Charlestown can have points awarded on their application. Also points for handicap or those with a minor child, etc. Members reviewed and noted there are preferences that the developer can put forth in the tenant selection process. Evelyn noted we continue this discussion in December and January to prepare for Tenant selection process. Sean suggested perhaps a meeting with the Project Management Company to go over some of this information. Members will continue to discuss.

8. OLD BUSINESS.

a) Commission Goal #1. Discussion of preliminary Town brochure and information update plan for Churchwoods. This was discussed under ChurchWoods update.

b) Commission Goals 2016. Status, update and consideration of applicability to 2017 goals, to be further specified in December: deferred to future meeting.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT. None.

10. NEXT MEETING. The next regular monthly meeting is scheduled for December 15, 2016, at 7:00 p.m.

11. ADJOURNMENT. Motion made and seconded to adjourn at 9:28 PM.

**Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Karasuk Puchalski, Secretary**

Minutes approved as corrected, at the January 19, 2017, Regular Meeting of the Affordable Housing Commission.