

**Affordable Housing Commission – Monthly Meeting**  
**THURSDAY, April 25, 2013 – 7:00 PM**

Charlestown Town Hall Annex Conference Room, 4540 South County Trail, Charlestown RI

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM by Evelyn Smith, Chair. Cely O'Brien volunteered to take minutes.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**Present**

Evelyn Smith, Chair  
Sean White, Vice Chair  
Ernest Morreira  
Sandra Puchalski  
Cecelia (Cely) O'Brien  
Faith LaBossiere

**Excused**

Ashley Hahn-Morris, Town Planner  
Tom Gentz, Council Liaison

**3. MINUTES**

Minutes of the March 28, 2013, Regular Meeting were approved as presented, on a motion by Ernest, seconded by Sandra, 5-0, with one abstention (Faith). The April 5th meeting minutes were unanimously approved, motion by Cely and seconded by Sandra. Minutes of December 13, 2012, and December 20, 2012, were approved on a motion by Sean and seconded by Faith, 3-0, with three abstentions (Ernest, Sandra, Cely).

**4. COMMUNICATIONS**

Evelyn distributed the April 5th meeting minutes and reviewed the monthly communications. The Monthly Communications Report is attached to these minutes. Motion made by Cely and seconded by Sandra to place Communications report on file. All voted in favor of motion. The communications and documents noted in the report, and any additional documents received at this meeting will be placed on file.

**5. STAFF REPORTS on current Affordable Housing issues.**

Town Planner Ashley Hahn Morris was not able to be present.

**6. REPORT, TOWN COUNCIL LIASION**

Town Council Liaison, Tom Gentz, although not able to be present, has informed the Chair that there will be a town forum on the wind turbine proposal on 5/21/13, with possible continuations conflicting with the regularly scheduled Affordable Housing Commission meeting. The commission voted unanimously, at the Chair's request, to reschedule the May meeting to May 30th at 7:00pm.

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

**(a) House Bills H-5247 and H-5960**

Members discussed the House Bill H-5247 submitted by Rep. Donna Walsh at Charlestown's request, to establish a moratorium on for-profit Affordable Housing

comprehensive permit applications until 2016. The House Finance Committee, at the start of the scheduled hearing, voted to hold all bills being presented that evening for further committee consideration. Tom and Evelyn represented Charlestown and joined Rep. Walsh in testifying in favor of the bill. Their testimony was to the effect that Charlestown has an approved Affordable Housing Plan, is supporting its implementation with a \$1-million town Affordable Housing Bond, but believes that the current law improperly permits the forcible imposition of overly dense developments in environmentally sensitive areas, in conflict with town zoning regulations. Evelyn and Tom answered questions. There was no formal support on this bill from other rural communities at the time of the hearing. The commission felt that support from other communities would help the bill's passing. The commission will talk to Tom Gentz to see if he is amenable to reaching out again to other towns. Amy Rainone from RI Housing testified against the bill, saying there was no evidence of widespread need for another moratorium, since the economy has limited new housing applications, but supported the need to review the current law by reestablishing the Affordable Housing Oversight Committee. (This is the subject matter of Bill H-5960, which will be reviewed by the House Finance Committee on May 30th.)

In follow-up discussion, Ernest expressed a need for an association of Affordable Housing Commissions from all towns. This would facilitate communication between our counterparts in other towns. Evelyn, while in favor of such an association, cautioned that the Affordable Housing Commissions from other towns may not all have the same operational function. In order to find out how each town's AHC is operating, it was suggested that Sheila Brush from GrowSmart may be a good person to contact for more information. Cely mentioned awareness of a study in MA regarding Affordable Housing and Rural Communities. She will try to get a copy for the commission.

#### **(b) Commission Reorganization**

Sandra nominated Cely O'Brien for the position of secretary, seconded by Ernest. No other nominations. Motion passed.

#### **(c) Commission Goals**

Evelyn asked members to take responsibility for a goal established at the 2/28/13 meeting. The first task is the restatement of the end goal. Each sub-committee is to inform Evelyn when to put their input onto the meeting agenda. The sub-committees are as follows:

**Evelyn Smith/Sean White** - Income restricted accessory dwellings and Regulation of municipal subsidies in conjunction with IRADU review.

**Ernest Morreira** - Study the availability of outside resources and information to create a way to make more informed decisions.

**Faith LaBossiere/Cely O'Brien** - Revision of Bond Procedure and recommendations for bonds.

**Sandra Puchalski/Evelyn Smith** - Models for rental housing trust and proposal for the purpose of making income restricted rental units feasible.

## **8. OLD BUSINESS**

### **(a) Legislative Priorities for 2013**

Councilman George Trembley presented his list of Priorities for Revision of the LMIH Act to the Town Council. The Town Council decided to adopt George's list of priorities to send to the Regional Planning Council, with our report attached. Evelyn will put the final copy of April 5, 2013 report on file and distribute final result to members. Evelyn distributed a copy of George's list.

### **(b) Affordable H.O.M.E.S. Follow-up**

Cely presented financials for the feasibility of Affordable H.O.M.E.S. It seems there is merit to the proposition. More information is required for the affordable housing version of the state's Farm Forest Open Space Program.

The remaining agenda items will be carried over to the May agenda.

### **9) Public Comment** - none

**10. Next Meeting.** – Next regular meeting to be held on May 30, 2013, at 7:00 PM.

**11. Adjournment.** Meeting adjourned at 8:36 PM

Respectfully submitted,

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Cecelia O'Brien, Secretary

Approved at the \_\_\_\_\_ meeting of the Affordable Housing Commission.