

**Final Minutes**  
**Affordable Housing Commission – Monthly Meeting**  
**THURSDAY, MAY 17, 2018 – 7:00 P.M.**

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

**1. CALL TO ORDER.** Meeting called to order at approx. 7:13 pm by Chairman Smith.

**2. ROLL CALL.** Chairman Evelyn Smith, Secretary Sandra Karasuk Puchalski, AHC member Ernest Morreira, Town Council Liaison Denise Rhodes.

**3. MINUTES.** (a) Members reviewed minutes for **January 18, 2018** Regular Meeting. An amendment was suggested to change 7(a) to read: "The Town Council **is considering** a resolution...". Motion made by Ernest to accept January 18 minutes with amendment and typo corrections. Sandra seconded. All voted in favor of motion.

(b) Members reviewed minutes for the **February 15, 2018** Regular Meeting, motion made by Ernest and seconded by Sandra to accept as presented. All voted in favor of motion. The March 22, 2018 and April 19, 2018 Regular Meetings were cancelled and there are no minutes. A meeting of the Affordable Housing Trust Subcommittee was held on April 19, 2018, and the subcommittee members will report under item 7(a).

**4. COMMUNICATIONS. Communications Report.**

a) **Accessory Dwelling Units.** Members reviewed the emails from Ernest on various newspaper articles of interest, including one dealing with the revision of the state zoning act with regard to accessory dwelling units. Ernest noted that we need to make sure our ordinance is consistent with the revised state law and also that our present ordinance on Accessory Dwelling Units is not working. Ernest urged the Commission to take this matter under consideration and recommend the necessary revisions to our ordinance to become consistent with the new state law, and educate the community as to the changes made, perhaps through the Town Pipeline. Other members suggested that additional areas for review include the requirement of a 30 year deed restriction, and the subordination issues it creates, as well as the need to clarify and develop the appropriate tax break or tax credit originally proposed. The Chairman agreed to research the effect of the state law's revision, and to bring the matter back to the commission for consideration.

b) **RI Housing 2017 Count.** Evelyn reported that she had been asked by the Planner on April 26, to review the Charlestown LMIH numbers in the draft report for accuracy. After some research of the Tax Assessor's records, she concluded that the RIH report was missing 6 completed units at Village Farm, as only one of the 32 income-restricted condo units remains in the developer's name, and the draft report accounted for only 25. She reported back to the Planner, and to RIH, that the draft should be revised to report 130 LMIH units: 24 Elderly, 49 Family, and 57 Special Needs (Group Home beds.) She noted that that would have the effect of increasing our LMIH percentage of total year-round housing units to 3.72%.

**5. STAFF REPORTS on current Affordable Housing issues.** There were no staff reports presented.

**6. REPORT, TOWN COUNCIL LIAISON.** Councilor Rhodes reported that the Town Council presented a Resolution of Respect to Lou Raymond, honoring his service to the community during his tenure as executive director of South County Habitat for Humanity. She also noted they sent a resolution to RI Legislature regarding forming a committee to study LMIH, in

support of the Town of Gloucester's resolution; and a resolution calling for the elimination of the sunset provision that would end mortgage foreclosure mediation.

## **7. NEW BUSINESS.**

**a) Member Reports. Report of April 19, 2018, Special Meeting of the Affordable Housing Trust Subcommittee.** Ernest reported that he and Evelyn continued to work on a proposal to establish an Affordable Housing Trust Fund. They focused their review on the Barrington model, and they agreed to split the work. Ernest will work on an informational outline and rationale for the proposal. Evelyn will generate an outline of the required components of a new ordinance. They will then bring that modeling back to the AHC to finalize, and the AHC will then forward the accepted draft to the Town Council. They expect that it will be a dedicated fund, and that, like the bond money, it will support new opportunities for Affordable Housing Units. Meanwhile, the Subcommittee will endeavor to see that the concept of an Affordable Housing Trust Fund is provided to the Planning Commission for their consideration for its inclusion in the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

**b) Member Reports. Report of May 2, 2018, Special Meeting of the Planning Commission.** Evelyn and Ernest attended and reported that the draft Housing element of the comprehensive plan was discussed. It was noted that the consultant appears to have considered our Commission's recommendations, and that much of that is reflected in the draft that was reviewed. However, both felt that it still needs work. They noted there seemed to be confusion between a land trust and the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and they now get it. It is important to be sure that the Trust Fund is represented accurately, as well as the virtual lack of year-round rental housing. Evelyn noted that she touched upon four critical things for the consultant's and the Planning Commission's consideration at the close of the meeting. 1) Affordable Housing Trust Fund, not a town-operated Housing Land Trust. 2) Need for year-round rental housing and the cost-effectiveness of repurposing existing housing units into rental units. 3) To clarify that Affordable Housing units must be permitted and encouraged in what the state refers to as our "Growth Centers" (we have no "Urban Centers") because all the LMIH subsidy funding mechanisms require the subsidized units to be located in these centers. We call them villages and not growth centers, but it is essential that the Plan not impede the placement of LMIH in the villages recognized by the state as Growth Centers. 4) "Affordable" vs "LMIH" in draft document language is sometimes confusing or misleading. "LMIH" should be used except in generic prose portions of the Plan.

## **8. OLD BUSINESS.**

**a) Commission 2017 Goal #3: Guided Review of Affordable Trust Models.** Continued to next meeting.

**9. PUBLIC COMMENT.** None.

**10. NEXT MEETING.** The next regular meeting is scheduled for June 21, 2018, at 7:00 p.m.

**11. ADJOURNMENT.** With business concluded at 9:10 p.m., a motion to adjourn was made, seconded and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sandra Karasuk Puchalski, Secretary

**APPROVED JUNE 21, 2018**