

FINAL MINUTES
Affordable Housing Commission
THURSDAY, May 19, 2016 – 7:00 P.M.

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

1. CALL TO ORDER. Meeting called to order by Chairman Evelyn Smith at 7:03 p.m..

2. ROLL CALL. AHC Members present. Chairman- Evelyn Smith, Recording Secretary- Sandra Karasuk Puchalski, AHC Members Ernest Morreira and Brian McDonald. Vice Chairman Sean White was excused. Tom Gentz, Town Council Liaison, was also present.

3. MINUTES. Sandra reported she had not completed her transcription of April 21st minutes. Motion made by Ernest and seconded by Brian to defer minutes of April 21st until next meeting. All voted in favor of motion. Motion carried.

4. COMMUNICATIONS. The Chair reported that the RI Housing: Projecting Future Housing Needs in Rhode Island is available online. Ernest noted that the report was done by HousingWorks RI at Roger Williams University, which he believes is becoming an affordable housing group vs an economic advocacy group. Members questioned how reliable the conclusions are, and whether the growing populations of Seniors and Millennials cited will actually remain in state and be qualified for LMIH. Evelyn noted there is a federal movement afoot to reduce the mandatory age for income withdrawals from IRA's, from the current age of 70 ½, to 65. This will increase income tax revenues federally, but may affect the qualification of households for LMIH.

Evelyn also noted committee email correspondence from Ernest announcing the availability of \$3 million for the creation of affordable rental units, coming through HUD's Housing Trust Fund. She also noted that she was in receipt of an email from GrowSmartRI announcing a public transportation workshop, "Making Transit Work for your Community, on May 25 in Warwick.

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

6. REPORT, TOWN COUNCIL LIAISON. Tom reported that the ChurchWoods group went to CRMC and received approval for the stormwater run-off plan. The Department of Health report (Public Well) is under way. After this, then it is on to Planning for ChurchWoods.

7. NEW BUSINESS.

a) GrowSmartRI – 2016 Power of Place Summit. Evelyn noted this major conference will be at the Rhode Island Convention Center, June 21, 2016. Registration is \$35-\$40. If any members have time to go, this is an interesting conference. Evelyn will check with the Town Administrator on any allowance \$ for members to go.

8. OLD BUSINESS.

a) Proposed Commission Goal #6. Members continued discussion of an Affordable Housing Units database for the Town of Charlestown LMIH units and corresponding procedures necessary for the regular monitoring and update of pertinent information.

Evelyn noted she had condensed our discussions and we can suggest starting a process along that would trigger a review by the monitoring agency. Evelyn noted at our review of the last list provided by RI Housing there were several units we noted that were not listed. Our first job is to find all the units and get the list updated. Village Farm is the most obvious omission. Edwards Lane

are all occupied. The Town also has 2 new units financed through CDBG funding, being the 2 replacement trailers.

The most readily-available information should be found at the Tax Assessors office, and the Land Evidence record referenced there should include the housing restrictions. The housing restrictions should include monitoring agency requirements. Members thought a system and policy needs to be in place to capture restricted units when the restrictions are recorded.

Evelyn noted that the Town Planner's office has asked for our help to sort it out. Members noted that we can suggest data points to be captured at Tax Assessors office and this will help us to capture a realistic list of units. Tom suggested that a subcommittee might be appropriate to accomplish this and then members can reach out to appropriate Town Departments for assistance. It was agreed that Brian would volunteer to reach out to the Tax Assessor and see where we can begin this process. It was noted that there should be a trigger so that the Town Planner gets the current information to supply to RI Housing. Members discussed that there may be a universal Tax Assessors Code or it may be a manual code that can be put in. This will assist us in getting a current list of age-restricted and income restricted units.

Members discussed that the problem may be with the monitoring agency not reporting the units as they are placed into service. Sandra noted there should be a contract we can review of the Monitoring Agency and see what the requirement is. Who reports the unit to Rhode Island Housing? Does the Town report new units? What documentation needs to be provided? Does RIH produce a list from monitoring agency reports that we then have to check over?

After discussions, motion made by Sandra and seconded by Ernest to authorize Brian to secure the RI Housing list from 2015 from the Town Planner and to begin discussion with the Tax Assessor to identify known Low – Moderate Income Housing Units not on the list. All voted in favor of motion. Motion carried.

b) Commission Goals 2016. Members discussed the following project goals for 2016.

1) Project-based information and education plan(s). It was noted that the first goal here is to utilize existing communication channels through the Senior Center / Community Center monthly newsletters, and the Town Administrator's office email and Pipeline programs. Ernest noted that we need to discuss a fact sheet and more info that will be available for us to educate the community and that we have talked about the fact sheet. There was a suggestion to couple Goal #1 & #2, however it was noted that they are a whole year apart and it is best to keep them separate. Units are expected to become available on market in September 2017.

2) Marketing plan analysis and resident advocacy for LMIH projects. Members agreed that we will hold off on this project goal at the present time.

3) Research and recommendations for the creation of an Affordable Housing Trust. Evelyn noted that we are still ongoing research on this and Ernest has provided us with three models thus far and that we can search for a few more. Evelyn noted she will gather this information together for members to review and discuss.

4) Zoning modifications, tax relief ordinance language and other measures to assist in the process of making Income-Restricted Accessory Housing Unit feasible. On this goal, Evelyn noted she will also put together what we have discussed thus far and members can review.

5) Input into the Comprehensive Plan proposals for Growth Centers to assure that Smart Growth Strategies, necessary for funding viability for LMIH projects, are included. Evelyn noted that we have accomplished this and we have done what we can with this goal until the proposed Comp. Plan is more ready for review.

6) Affordable Housing Units Database for the Town of Charlestown with procedures for the regular monitoring and update of pertinent information. Evelyn noted that we have discussed this and voted to have Brian begin process as noted.

c) LMIH Municipal Subsidy Ordinance. Deferred to future meeting.

d) Comprehensive Plan Housing and Land Use Elements. To be continued on future agenda when plan revisions are available.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT. No public comments.

10. NEXT MEETING. The next regular monthly meeting is scheduled for June 16, 2016, at 7:00 p.m.

11. ADJOURNMENT. Meeting adjourned at approx.. 9:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Karasuk Puchalski , Secretary

Minutes approved as amended, at the June 16, 2016, Regular Meeting of the Affordable Housing Commission.