

**Draft Minutes
Town of Charlestown
Affordable Housing Commission
September 22, 2021**

Call to Order

The Chair, Evelyn Smith, called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Attendance

Present: Thom Cahir, Cathy Solomon, Jake Wolfgang, Claudette Baril, Evelyn Smith. Also present was Susan Cooper, Town Council liaison to the Affordable Housing Commission.

Absent (excused) Sandra Puchalski

Minutes

Motion to accept the Minutes of the meeting of August 18, 2021 Solomon/Cahir. Unanimously approved.

Communications - Staff Reports - Town Council Liaison Report

Evelyn reported on the letter referred to the Affordable Housing Commission from the Town Clerk's office dated September 2, 2021. Said letter from the office of the Director of the State Department of Administration is reported under new business.

New Business

The Commission reviewed the notice of property available through Disposition of Surplus State Land. Although the property at 87 Carolina Back Road might have offered possibilities for meeting the need for low and moderate income housing in Charlestown, the Town cannot acquire the property at this time. The letter from the Department of Administration with attached Purchase and Sale Contract offered the property at 87 Carolina Back Road for \$303,000, however, "failure by the Town to accept this offer within thirty (30) days of this letter shall be deemed to be a waiver of the Town's statutory right to purchase the property." Peter Ruggiero reported that the process and requirements for the Town to purchase this property cannot be met due to the Charter requirements that would require the town to substitute itself for the current buyer which cannot happen without voter approval. Evelyn Smith provided a detailed report on the lot itself, purchase history and the building and its interior and exterior condition. The property has been used as a group home until recently. Evelyn also reported on her conversations about the property with other partnering organizations, Habitat and the Warm Shelter, and their support of the town purchasing additional affordable housing.

Motion was made at 8:35 p.m. to extend the meeting. (Wolfgang/Solomon. Unanimous.)

Discussion ensued about this missed opportunity and the need for the Commission to work with the Town to have town funding readily available for such offers in the future. Evelyn brought up that the timing of the auction and the purchase time frame seems inconsistent with state regulations. The question came up about how other towns manage these types of offers in the interest of affordable housing. Motion was made to authorize Chair, Evelyn Smith, to report concerns by the Commission voiced at this meeting to the Town Council in an effort to work together to be better prepared to procurement of housing in the future. (Cahir/Solomon. Unanimous)

Regular Business

- a) LMIH status. Cathy reported on her research on Conveyance Tax but discussion was tabled until next meeting. Evelyn suggested that we create a list of all the AH units in Charlestown as well as a list of state-owned housing in Charlestown.
- b) Building Partnerships. Other than opinion of partners about 87 Carolina Back Road, this topic was tabled until next meeting
- c) Community Awareness. Jake reported on updates needed to the town's website regarding LMIH. Further discussion at next meeting.

Old Business None

Public Comment No public present.

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday October 20, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment Motion to adjourn at 9:05 p.m. (Baril/Cahir Unanimous)

Respectfully submitted,

Claudette Baril
She/her/hers

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