

MINUTES

TOWN OF CHARLESTOWN
Affordable Housing Commission
February 16, 2022

1. **Call to Order:** Evelyn Smith called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.
2. **Roll Call:** In keeping with the Governor's requirements, the meeting was virtual. Present: Evelyn Smith, Thom Cahir, Jake Wolfgang, Claudette Baril, Sandra Puchalski. Excused absence: Cathy Solomon. Town Council Liaison, Susan Cooper, was not in attendance.
3. **Minutes** Minutes of September meeting were reviewed. Motion to accept: Puchalski/Cahir. Unanimous. October meeting minutes will be reviewed at the next meeting.
4. **Communications/Staff Reports/Commissioners' Reports**
 - a. Town Council Liaison, Susan Cooper, was not in attendance.
 - b. Chair, Evelyn Smith, reported that the Town Council did not get to the Trust Fund agenda item. The meeting will be continued February 28. Evelyn reported that in April, 2019 the Town Council accepted a report from the Affordable Housing Commission Establishing an Affordable Housing Trust Fund which would be run by town staff and guided by a Housing Board of Trustees. There was no further action on the town's part, and the Affordable Housing Commission did not meet for several months because the number of members were too low to have a quorum as well as restrictions of the pandemic.

In late 2021, Evelyn requested that the Town Council revisit the Trust Fund and requested feedback/input from the town Solicitor, Treasurer and Planner to be included with feedback from the Affordable Housing Commission prior to the February Council meeting. On December 31, 2022, AHC Chair, Evelyn Smith, again wrote to the Town Administrator and Town Solicitor asking for input to be brought back to the Affordable Housing Commission prior to Town Council review, but again had no response. Instead, the Town Administrator sent the 2019 plan to the Town Council along with revisions to the Barrington ordinance, drafted by the town Solicitor. The Barrington ordinance was only an early effort to draft a Trust Fund plan based on a town with similarities to Charlestown.

So there has been no recent review or revision and no formal input from the current AHC. Evelyn expressed some basic concerns that the language/

standards in the Comprehensive Plan are not consistent with state language regarding expectations and eligibility around affordable housing. The administrative and operating costs of the Housing Board of Trustees should be managed and scrutinized as a Town budget expense and not commingled with funds held in trust for the production of housing. The Comprehensive Plan of the town lays out general areas of concern around housing but a more specific LMIH plan that identifies current subsidy, programs and state initiatives should be reviewed annually and the Comprehensive Plan for housing be modified (if need be) as current programs and policies evolve.

5. New Business

a. Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The history as noted above and the continuation of the Town Council meeting has limited the ability for the AHC to incorporate town staff feedback or changes to the Barrington draft prior to Town Council review.

6. Regular Business - the meeting was devoted to the current issue of the Trust Fund and regular business was tabled for future meeting.

- a. Assessment of LMIH status
- b. Building partnerships
- c. Community Awareness
- d. Commission Assignments

7. Old Business no time to address at this meeting

- a. State-owned properties

8. Public Comment No public at the meeting

9. Next Meeting Wednesday, March 16 at 7 p.m. In-person or virtual to be determined.

10. Adjournment Motion to adjourn 8:45 p.m. Baril/Cahir. Unanimous

Respectfully submitted

Claudette Baril, Secretary

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