

**Ashburnham Affordable Housing Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
February 6, 2006**

**I. Introductions**

**A. Town Administrator**

The Town Administrator, Kevin Paicos, introduced himself to the Committee. The ad for the Affordable Housing Committee brought in more Applicants than available slots. He thanked and congratulated the new members. Mr. Paicos provided examples of his experience working with Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit projects. Recommended partnering with other housing advocates, such as Habitat for Humanity. Zoning tools, such as Inclusionary Zoning. Look at Town-owned parcels, including buildable lots, that could be made available for affordable housing purposes.

**B. Town Planner**

The Town Planner, Eric R. Smith, then introduced himself to the Committee. In his prior position as Assistant Town Planner in Mashpee, Mr. Smith provided Staff support to the Mashpee Affordable Housing Committee from November 2002 to June 2005. He secured a grant to have a consultant prepare an Affordable Housing Plan, which was approved by the State in June 2005.

**C. Committee member introduction**

John MacMillan – Planning Board member. Been on the Planning Board for over 20 years.

Carole A. Corstange – Realtor representative. Ashburnham resident for 33 years.

Donna Brooks – Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) member. Working for Affordable Housing at the ZBA level. Member of the Government Affairs *Committee* with the Mass. Association of Realtors.

Rachel Fowler – Habitat for Humanity. Works full time with an Insurance Company, also volunteers with Cub Scouts. Served on Ashburnham Police Chief Search Committee.

Pat Dennehy – Realtor Representative. Works with Foster-Healey Realtors. Lived in Ashburnham for 40 years. Would like to see provisions for a variety of housing.

Nancy Fiske – Moved to Ashburnham in 1991. First became involved in Affordable Housing in 1973. Served on the Amherst Housing Authority for 5 years, 3 as Chairperson.

Dale Proulx. Has served as Pastor for the *Ashburnham Community Church* for the past 11 years. Has worked with Habitat for Humanity. Serving on the Affordable Housing Committee is part of Church outreach.

**II. Purpose/Goals and Objectives of Affordable Housing Committee**

The Town Administrator indicated the first step is for the Committee to determine the housing needs are. The Town Planner added this task would be a part of the Affordable Housing Plan, which is one of the tasks associated with the Affordable Housing Committee. The Town Administrator expressed his support if the Committee needed a Consultant to assist in completing the Affordable Housing Plan. The Town Planner indicated that since the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) prepared for the Town an *Ashburnham Community Development Plan* (“CD Plan”) in 2004, a lot of the required information for the Affordable Housing Plan is easily available. Thus, the Town Planner recommends that he work with the Committee on trying to do this Plan in house. The Town Planner will prepare a timetable to complete the Plan as well as the Housing element from the CD Plan at the next meeting.

The Town Administrator also discussed how Affordable Housing projects can be proposed as

a MGL Chapter 40B project or under a program entitled "Local Initiative Project (LIP)." The Town Planner discussed a proposed LIP in South Ashburnham that maybe coming forward shortly. The Affordable Housing Committee would play a role in review this and other future projects.

### **III. Committee Organization**

The Committee voted Rachel Fowler as the Clerk of the Affordable Housing Committee. Nominations and voting for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman were tabled until the next meeting.

### **IV. Regular Meeting Schedule**

The Committee decided that their regular meeting date would be the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month at 5:30p.m. The next meeting would be on Monday, March 13, 2006 at 5:30p.m. The Town Administrator offered the use of his office for the Committee's meetings.

### **V. Other New Business**

Discussion was held on timeframe of affordable housing units with the Town Administrator indicating that 15 years is the minimum. The Town Planner said how most Towns prefer to negotiate for affordable units to remain as such in perpetuity.

Some Committee members had questions on what income levels qualify as Affordable Housing. To qualify for state Affordable Housing, 80% of the Town's Median Income is used. Each year the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issues income guidelines for every community. The Town Planner will research the current income guidelines and provide to each Committee member before the next meeting.

Discussion was held on establishing an Ashburnham Housing Authority. The Town Planner indicated that he heard interest from other Town residents about this idea. Establishment of, and regulations thereof, a Housing Authority is found under MGL Chapter 121B.

Donna Brooks requested a list of Town owned buildings and parcels. The Town Planner said he would request the current list from the Town Assessors.

### **VI. Adjournment**

The Affordable Housing Committee adjourned the meeting at 5:45p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eric R. Smith, Town Planner, AICP