

TOWN OF STOW
STOW MUNICIPAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST (SMAHT)

Minutes of the October 3, 2012 SMAHT meeting.

SMAHT members: Mike Kopczynski, Quince Papanastassiou, Cynthia Perkins, Trish Settles, Laura Spear

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM.

1. Meeting Schedule

October 24
November 7

2. Minutes Review, vote to approve

Trish moved to approve the minutes of the September 20, 2012 meeting, Cynthia seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Trustee Reports

Laura read a memo from the Planning Board in regards to the municipal parcel in Gleasondale. She will get an electronic version of it and send it to the Board.

Trish reminded the Board that DHCD has an extra \$15K that communities can apply for planning purposes. The funds have to result in housing within three years. There is a rolling deadline to apply. We should put this on the agenda of our next meeting. It could be applied to a feasibility study to evaluate the potential of municipal parcels. Trish will bring the RFP to our next meeting.

Trish is also trying to get more information on Chapter 40T to keep expiring affordable units on the SHI.

Mike commented on the memo sent by the regional housing coordinators about identifying rehabilitation and repair funds.

Laura attended the last regional housing coordinators meeting in Acton on September 20. She reported on projects that other towns are doing. Other updates include DHCD's lack of interest in renting affordable units until they can sell, DHCD's involvement in housing that affects tribal issues, updates to Chapter 40B are out for public comment, and the need for a centralized database for affordable housing units in the state.

Cynthia reported that Oak Tree Development is interested in bigger projects. Additionally, our RFP for grants for historical reuse only applies to nonprofits, and for-profits cannot apply.

Mike said that Donna has been unable to attend meetings due to health issues. The Board agreed that she has a lot to offer and would value all that she could contribute as she is able.

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Mike also reported that Dina Vargo of the Mass Housing Partnership is profiling SMAHT in the next newsletter because of all of the affordable housing tools we have adopted. Mike thinks we should have a housing trust summit with MHP and local housing trusts to share experience and programs, including best practices, tools for your affordable housing tool belt, policies, advocacy and outreach, and marketing.

4. Review and decide on Housing Specialist position

Mike followed up with the Town Administrator about the process and requirements for making a decision on the Housing consultant. The Town Administrator reiterated that the Board was required to seek proposals from at least 3 vendors (unless the requested service is a specialty such that there are not at least 3 qualified vendors in the field). Because only 2 responded, the Board is permitted to work with the 2 who responded. Unless we could make a persuasive argument that the low bidder cannot reasonably provide the services requested for his price, we would need to either accept his bid or reject both bids and re-bid.

The Board discussed the applicants, their experience, and their interviews. Although there were differences in project experience, both candidates met the minimum criteria. The two members unable to attend had provided input to the Chair as well.

Trish moved to accept the lowest qualified bidder, Leonardi Aray, per the terms of his proposal. Laura seconded, and approval was unanimous.

From our discussions, it became clear that the Board has as its highest priority to identify a parcel and get affordable housing built. The goal for the remainder of this fiscal year would be to bring a warrant article to the Annual Town Meeting, involving 1-2 municipally owned parcels for affordable housing.

Going forward, based on input from other trusts, the Board would like to have the consultant focus on the projects and not clerical work. Mike will look into having a space to work and a clerical resource when the consultant is in town. Additionally, in other towns, the Affordable Housing Trust gets funded from the Community Preservation Act Trust to create a unit. When the unit is sold, the funds go to the Affordable Housing Trust fund. In this way, the Affordable Housing Trust can subsidize buyers based on the number of bedrooms on a sustainable basis.

We were also advised to begin each Trust meeting with a status review since the last meeting (including an invoice), determine what needs to be done by the next meeting, and review goals quarterly. We should also identify one or two persons to act as primary contacts. The Trust also agreed that if we held more than one meeting a month, the consultant would probably only need to attend one in person. He could attend additional meetings by phone if needed. He should also represent Stow in meetings with other regional housing coordinators or meetings with other trusts. Mike will discuss how to handle payment for these activities if the consultant is already attending on behalf of another town.

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At our October 24 meeting, we will identify goals with specific activities. We'll invite Leonardi to the meeting shortly after we start so that we can review the goals with him. Our focus will be on the development of new affordable units. Tasks will include reviewing the land Use Taskforce report, reviewing the Housing Production Plan, reviewing the tax foreclosure lands and Planning Board report, and reviewing the Gleasondale parcel.

We'll need to assemble a packet of information, including the loan documents and grant information.

5. Review options for expiring deed restrictions

Trish addressed this in her Trustee report.

6. Adjourn

Laura moved to adjourn, and Quince seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor. The SMAHT meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Spear
SMAHT member

Laura Spear 10/24/12