

**TOWN OF WINCHESTER  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST  
Tuesday, April 26, 2022  
Meeting Minutes**

**OPENING**

Chair Marty Jones called the meeting to order at 5:00pm via zoom remote participation due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency. The following Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) members were present: Acting Town Manager Beth Rudolph, Carey Sue Barney (Vice Chair), Mike Bettencourt (Select Board), Stacey Irizarry, Kris Galletta, and Robin Swan (Micheal Queenan was absent). The following guests were also in attendance - Sue Cashell (Winchester Housing Authority), John Suhrbier (Housing Partnership Board), Zeina Marchant (Winchester Housing Coalition) and Liora Norwich (Network for Social Justice).

**BUSINESS**

**1. Discussion/Briefing on Winchester Housing Organizations**

- Ms. Jones noted that the goal of this portion of the meeting was to facilitate an open discussion with all entities involved in affordable housing in Winchester. The AHT prepared three question for each guest to answer in a round-table format.
- Question 1 - What is your organization's role in affordable housing in Winchester? Describe your organization's short (1-year) and long term priorities.
  - Mr. Suhrbier - HPB was created in Town Meeting in 1987 to advise on affordable housing related matters - typically the Select Board and Planning Board. Over the years, the Board's role has expanded beyond advisory. The HPB was involved in the drafting of the inclusionary housing regulations in the CBD, and has assisted with the Waterfield Lot development. Their short term priorities are keeping up with the various affordable housing projects - Waterfield, Washington/Swanton, 10 Converse Place, Winning Farm, 654 Main Street, etc. Long-term priority is convincing the Town to be proactive at looking at other initiatives - i.e. Holton Street and North Main Street.
  - Ms. Cashell - WHA goal is to promote fair and adequate housing for low income residents. WHA controls 112 units for elderly/disabled residents, 7 family housing units, and 5 management units. They also have 143 Section 8 vouchers, but most placements are not in Winchester due to the lack of rental units. Long-term priority is to establish a group home in Winchester for young disabled people.
  - Ms. Marchant - Affordable Housing Coalition is just starting out, and came from grassroot efforts in the Network for Social Justice. They received a grant from CHAPA on how to build the coalition in 2021, including building a mission statement, and developing community engagement, outreach, and advocacy. The long-term goal is to create an independent body to support affordable housing.
- Question 2 - What helps your organization be successful and what are the challenges to your success?

- Ms. Cashell - WHA employees are what make them successful. Only have 1.5 employees for maintenance of all their properties. The biggest challenges are funding and (currently) finding contractors to work on their properties.
- Ms. Marchant - The Coalition currently has 50 to 60 people involved. The biggest strengths are their experience in education, logistics, and organization. The challenges of affordable housing are complex.
- Mr. Suhrbier - HPB has been successful in recruiting knowledgeable people with a broad range of expertise. The challenges are many, driven generally by the housing needs in the greater Boston area and the growing gap between demand for housing and housing availability.
- Question 3 - What gaps do you see in affordable housing in Winchester?
  - Ms. Cashell - Section 8 voucher discrimination is an issue. Property owners need better explanation of the benefits of the program. Could be a possible area of assistance for the AHT (education).
  - Mr. Suhrbier - Biggest issues are the “missing middle” - i.e. rental units in the 60 to 120% AMI range
  - Ms. Marchant - Connecting resources to the need.

## **2. Update on Waterfield project**

- Select Board and staff are continuing to negotiate LDA/ground lease. Special Town Meeting scheduled for June 6<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.

## **3. Meeting Schedule:** The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 24<sup>th</sup> at 5pm.

**Meeting adjourned at 6:04pm.**