

Wenham Municipal Affordable Housing Trust

MINUTES

Meeting: Monday, September 21, 2009
Attending: Larry Swartz, Patrick Wilson, Molly Martins, Ken Whittaker, Jared Holbrook, and David Mehlin.
Also Present: Harriet Davis

Chair Molly Martins called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Ken Whittaker moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting, seconded by Larry Schwartz and approved by unanimous vote.

Ken Whittaker summarized activities for upcoming site tour and bidding for conversion of the 8 Friend Court (Barter Street Property). Four Requests For Proposals (RFPs) are to be sent out, followed by a tour of the facility on the morning of September 25, 2009. Peggy McNamara will attend as a representative of the Trust and Lisa Draper Small will be available to open the property for inspection. The Trust is in receipt of the appraisal for the property commissioned by Ms. Small and it was decided that there is no need for an additional appraisal at this time.

Molly Martins initiated the discussion concerning the status of the home at 79 Arbor Street. The potential cost of re-locating the home to a location off-site (estimated to be in the range of \$30,000) and the fact that impacts to the structure of such a move might necessitate substantial and costly repairs (in addition to the cost of new foundation and septic on nay new lot) were of concern to the group. Off site re-location was judged to be generally unfavorable by the Trust, and rather it was decided to solicit a proposal from Peter Gordeau for either possible relocation of 79 Arbor onto one of the lots in the planned development or construction of new affordable units on one of those lots. A financial contribution from the Trust for either of these two options may be considered.

The Trust wishes to make an effort at communication and outreach with the community. It was decided that the trust should plan on meeting with the Board of Selectmen (BOS) approximately once every other month, or when significant developments occur, to keep the public apprised of our efforts. Discussion ensued regarding possible further efforts at public outreach, including possible efforts in combination with the upcoming consideration via Town meeting of transfer monies originally set aside for affordable housing development at the Dearborn Property. It was decided to separate these two issues and that the issue of transferring the funds from the planned Dearborn acquisition to the Trust should not be brought up at the October Town meeting. The Trust agreed to meet with the BOS after the RFPs come back for the Barter Property and perhaps, at that time, consider a more formal presentation as to the mission and importance of the Trust for purposes of educating the public and “putting a face” on affordable housing in Wenham. It was noted by Patrick Wilson that Wenham has now met approximately 8.5%

of its 10% affordable housing goal with 83 of the needed 115 units available. Most of these units are in Enon Village.

There was a brief review of the Wenham's Housing Production Plan noting that the plan allows 70% of new affordable housing construction to be set aside for Wenham residents. There was some discussion as to ongoing efforts in Hamilton regarding planning under State law "40R" and possible impacts on Wenham. It was also noted that money held by the Trust, included funds transferred over from CPA funds, could if desired by the Trust be used for repair and upgrade of existing affordable units... There was in addition, brief discussion of existing funds that are available to the Trust from the Home Consortium. Approximately \$15,700 is available from this source with an additional amount of approximately \$240,000 available from previously allocated Town CPA funds. These amounts do not include any transfers over from the Dearborn Property funds as the current status of that transfer is uncertain.

The Trust wishes to identify other properties in town that may be suitable for conversion into affordable units. It was decided that the Trust would ask Peggy McNamara to prepare a list of homes in Town current for sale at less than \$400,000 as a starting point for the discussion of possible conversion of these units into multi-family residences. Following this was a discussion as to what were the criteria for establishing affordability, noting that this was a flexible standard based on interest rates, area incomes, etc. Molly Martins indicated that she would contact several sources, including the Merrimac Valley Commission, to determine the "formula" by which affordability can be determined and which will help the trust determine the financial limitations for establishing affordability for new units.

The Trust took several minutes to review the Summary of Housing Strategies contained in the Housing Production Plan and discussed general ideas for further research in identifying various ways to meet the Town's affordable housing goals.

A motion was made and seconded for adjournment, and the meeting adjourned at approximately 9:30 P.M.