

Edgartown Affordable Housing Committee Meeting

Tuesday June 22, 2021 at 5:00 PM

Members in Attendance: Mark Hess, Tim Rush, Christine White, Maria Ventura, Melissa Vincent

Chairman Hess opened the meeting at 5:00 PM.

Minutes: Tim Rush moved to approve the May 18, 2021 minutes. Christine White seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

1. Old Business:

- Meshacket RFP Final Draft: Chairman Hess welcomed Ann Silverman to the meeting. Ms. Silverman informed the Committee that they were sent a mostly final draft of the document and she was now waiting for town counsel to look at a very small amount of things that she included in a short list to the administrator and town counsel. Ms. Silverman's hope is to have the Select Board review and approve the document the following Monday and have it posted to the registry the following week. Ms. Silverman continued to discuss a potential time-line around the release of the RFP and the project moving forward. The Chairman thanked Ms. Silverman and the administrator for their work and attention to detail. Ms. Silverman asked the Committee that if there are other RFP's in play at the same time, were there concerns that there would not be as many proposals from developers. Chairman Hess responded that he had just had this discussion with the administrator and others and that his thoughts were that he thinks it is a good thing and it may be more beneficial and enticing for developers to have multiple jobs on the island. The administrator expressed that she had spoken to multiple colleagues and developers that agreed that it would not be an issue. Chairman Hess suggested that maybe it would be possible that a developer might even be able to obtain more state funding if multiple projects are happening at once and there is an obvious need for affordable housing funds for the region. Ms. Silverman expressed her hope that indeed this would be true as well as her hope that the Committee will receive bids from creative developers.
- Chasin/Litchfield lot update: The administrator informed the Committee that she spoke to town counsel and she informed the administrator that after looking into the paperwork for the Chasin lot she found that it had not been transferred over to the Town by the Chasin's lawyer and that she would need to spend some time to work that out. The administrator is hopeful that this can happen soon.

2. New Business:

- The Chairman informed the Committee that he had been in touch with residents of Morgan Woods who had mentioned that the management was doing a terrific job and had helped many people to received rental help and utility help as well as being available for any issues that tenants were having.
- AHC participation in planning board discussions: The administrator explained to the Committee there are multiple affordable housing initiatives currently happening on

the island, even with additional funding, if there aren't efforts made with other municipal departments, such as the Planning Board, there would potentially be issues developing housing because of out of date zoning by-laws. The administrator asked Juliet Mulinare to speak on the efforts taking place in the Masterplan Committee to address issues such as these.

Ms. Mulinare stated that in coming up with the overarching goals for proceeding with the Masterplan and how they are going to incorporate affordable housing into it, the topic of reforming zoning by-laws has been presented. It's fortunate that Lucy Morrison is heading up the planning board now (as Chairperson) because she is going to put into motion the reform of the zoning by-laws to accommodate affordable housing initiatives particularly focusing on existing lots. The idea is for the Planning Board to form a subcommittee to delve into the current zoning by-laws. The best thing to do in the mean-time is to begin informing ourselves with the current zoning by-laws and research what other towns and municipalities have done and are doing to reform their own zoning by-laws to make them more conducive to affordable housing. The administrator added that she could provide the Committee with resources upon request.

- Discussion to change administrator position to municipal housing director position: The Chairman informed the Committee that there was a brief conversation in regards to this topic at the Trust meeting where Select Board member Margaret Serpa was present. Select Person Serpa suggested speaking with the Town Administrator as well as the Personnel Board to go through the processes of creating the position. Chairman Hess went on to say that he had been speaking with the administrator about creating a town funded director position that would deal exclusively with Municipal Housing efforts. Right now, the administrator is paid from the Trust and the Chairman feels that given what's going on in regards to housing on the island right now the Town should have a position dedicated to housing efforts paid by the Town's general fund. The position would also have the authority to make decisions with consultation but without direct approval from the Committee. Given the times we are living in and given the needs of the island a Committee of volunteers can only do so much. The time is right and for the foreseeable future there will be a need for a full-time paid position to move affordable housing initiatives forward. The Chairman stated that Select Person Serpa suggested going to the Personnel Board with a job description, pay scale and eventually going to town meeting for approval. The Chairman added that even if it was not the current administrator who fills the position that the position is necessary. That being said, the administrator is interested in such a position and he thinks she has the interest, background and expertise to do the job. The Chairman asked the Committee if anyone had any comment or questions on the idea. The administrator asked if it was alright she would like to add that from the work that she has been doing with the Coalition to Create a Martha's Vineyard Housing Bank, she's been associated with a lot more housing advocates. One of these advocates is Tucker Holland on Nantucket, where a lot of great affordable housing efforts are taking place in terms of funding, zoning/multifamily housing units, all things that are possible here (on the Vineyard) if there are people here being paid to do the research and spend the

- time to do what is necessary to guide these efforts. Mr. Holland's position could be a model for what each town on the Vineyard could be doing. Therefore, that is what the administrator is hoping to present to the Personnel Board and Kim Lucas to work with the Committee to form this position. The Chairman presented the question to the Committee, is it a good and valid point to create this position and would they agree to go forward with it. Christine White replied she would agree to move forward and that she believes it to be long overdue. Melissa Vincent commented that she also believes it to be way overdue but she also wanted to mention that when looking at CPC applications in different towns she has seen requests for funding positions such as the administrator is suggesting. The Town could potentially look into funding the position that way if needed. Ms. Vincent added that no matter how it is funded that she supports the creation of the position and believes that it is something that Edgartown has needed for a very long time. Maria Ventura and Tim Rush replied that they felt the same way. The Chairman made a motion to have the administrator develop a job description, in terms of the details of the job, salary range, benefit range and to proceed with a package to present to the Personnel Board to advance the idea. Christine White seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Melissa Vincent added that someone should have a conversation with James Haggerty. Chairman Hess, suggested that after the administrator collects the relevant information, they could then pass it by James Haggerty who could then give it to the Personnel Board.
- Melissa Vincent asked if there had been any progress finding a representative to the Dukes County Regional Housing Authority. Maria Ventura replied that she and David Vigneault had been in contact in regards to that position but she is concerned about the time Commitment alongside the AHC commitment. Chairman Hess replied that this is one of the reasons he believes it necessary to have a director position in affordable housing because volunteers, even though well-meaning unfortunately do not have the time. The whole island has to have full-time, town funded positions that would allow for timely, efficient solutions to the island's affordable housing crisis. Melissa Vincent asked if the administrator could be paid to participate on the DCRHA board to represent Edgartown. The Chairman replied that he did not know what the town rules were or logistically if it is possible. The Chairman suggested that the administrator look into the technicalities from the town administrator and the ethics commission to see if this is possible.
3. Correspondence - Demo Delays: 10 Proprietors Road, 12 Katama Point Rd., 50 Curtis Ln. Melissa Vincent made a motion to pass on all three properties, Maria Ventura seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.
 4. Public Inquiry:
The Committee decided to use Zoom through September and resume in person meetings in October. The next meeting will be July 20, 2021.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Arielle Faria