

Edgartown Affordable Housing Committee Meeting

Tuesday July 20, 2021 at 5:00 PM

Members in Attendance: Mark Hess, Tim Rush, Christine White, Christina Brown

Also present: Jason Mazar-Kelly (Prospective Committee Member)

Chairman Hess opened the meeting at 5:00 PM.

Minutes: Christine White moved to approve the June 22, 2021 minutes. Tim Rush seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Hess decided he would start with New Business so that he could introduce the prospective new member of the AFC. Chairman Hess welcomed and introduced Jason Mazar-Kelly to the meeting, as well as the Committee members and invited Mr. Mazar-Kelly to tell the Committee a little about himself. Mr. Mazar-Kelly spoke briefly about himself, stating his interests in Affordable Housing and his own experience with housing on the island as well as his background as a CPA and yoga instructor/enthusiast.

Christine White made a motion to approve Mr. Mazar-Kelly as a new member to the Edgartown Affordable Housing Committee. Christina Brown seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Mazar-Kelly thanked the administrator and Committee for allowing him to participate on the Committee and mentioned he looks forward to working with everyone in the future.

Chairman Hess moved forward to the Chasin/Litchfield lot and asked the administrator to update the Committee. The administrator informed the Committee that she and town counsel had a slight delay in the process of preparing for the lottery because the attorney for the Chasin's had retired and the administrator had to research who was handling the estate currently. The administrator stated that it should not take much longer for the details to be worked out from here forward. Woody Filly spoke to the Committee about interests in the lot and the Committee answered general questions about the restrictions in the Covenant for the Chasin/Litchfield property.

The Chairman requested that the administrator update the Committee on the Meshacket RFP. The administrator informed the Committee that she had received the final draft of the RFP from Ann Silverman that afternoon and Jennifer Smyth, the town's procurement officer had begun the process of advertising the RFP in the papers and at the Central Registry. The administrator went on to inform the Committee of the dates the RFP would be published in various papers and websites as well as sending out an email to a list of developers to inform them of the RFPs release. The administrator informed the Committee of the onsite visit as well as a Zoom information session. The Chairman asked the administrator to speak to the Gazette about doing a piece on the RFP. The Chairman advised Mr. Mazar-Kelly that there may be a lot of affordable housing lingo bouncing around the discussion but he will start to understand more, over a short period of time and the Committee and administrator will be available to help him to learn all of these things along the way.

The Chairman expressed the desire to continue speaking about creating a new position that was spoken about at the last meeting. The Chairman went on to say that it was the desire of the Committee that the Town of Edgartown have a Municipal Housing Director as a full-time town paid position, particularly over the next couple of years with the Meshacket project being developed but also as a signal to town islands, that the town should have a Municipal Housing Director. The Chairman continued to say that this position should have real authority and deal with day to day tasks as well as being a full time paid position with all the benefits that other departments have. The Chairman stated that the administrator was tasked to do research and develop a comprehensive job description for the position and she has done an excellent job of coming up with a description that lays out all the particulars about the job and the potential salary range and every aspect. The administrator has spoken to James Haggerty and the Human Resources Department about the process of creating the position and folks seem positive about it. The Chairman stated that it is long overdue for a bonafide type of position to be created and the housing crisis on the island is not going to go away anytime soon therefore it would only make sense to make a permanent professional position such as this to move things into the right direction. Given the time constraints of the Committee members, it only makes sense to have someone executing tasks and researching as well as implementing policies that would positively affect the housing situation in the town. The Chairman continued to say that the administrator is committed to being here and would be well suited for the job if it were to work out that way.

The Chairman discussed an in person meeting in September or October depending on how the trajectory of the virus moves. The Committee agreed to wait a month to decide whether or not they would meet in person. The next AHC meeting will be held August 17, 2021.

The administrator explained to the Committee how she came up with the job description for the Municipal Housing director by speaking with the MHD on Nantucket, Tucker Holland and requesting information from their HR offices. After speaking to Mr. Holland the administrator realized that she is doing most of the same tasks he has been doing but without the authority that his position holds in in Nantucket. Christina Brown commented that the administrator has shown the Committee what the position really could be over the last couple of years and that the administrator has continued to learn and expand the position. The administrator asked the Committee if they had questions or comments on the draft description. Tim Rush asked the administrator if the position would be dealing with inventory the Committee already serves to monitor the different situations that come up for these properties, such as people that living in substandard properties and overcrowding situations as well as keeping on top of the residents that have affordable housing now. The administrator replied that this is something that she already does so yes, these are issues that the MHD would take on. The Committee discussed the position further. Christina Brown commented that more and more there are Committees that serve different purposes and paid professionals that implement tasks with approval from their Committees but she's concerned about giving the director more authority to make decisions just in determining what is acceptable to let this person approve themselves or come before the Committee to approve. Christina would like know if the director would be speaking on behalf of the Committee and what Edgartown is willing to let the director do on their own. The administrator let the Committee know that Jason Mazar-Kelly had expressed a need for

clarification on a section in the MHD position description that said it was possible for the hours to exceed 40 in any given week but there would not be additional compensation for the time. Mr. Mazar-Kelly was concerned that having a professional helping the affordable housing efforts, one should make sure they are reasonably compensated for their time to incentivize them to continue to put forth a strong effort into the position.

The administrator spoke to the Committee about the vacant seat on the Dukes County Regional Housing Authority's Board. After speaking to David Vigneault and Mr. Vigneault speaking to the current board members, they concluded that while the administrator can participate as tenant representative, she may not participate as a representative for the town of Edgartown. Therefore, the Committee must try to find another representative. The Committee discussed this and will revisit this topic at a meeting in the near future.

Future projects and AHC counsel: The administrator informed the Committee that she had spoken to the Chairman as well as the Town Administrator about her concern with the availability and expertise, in regards to affordable housing, of the current town counsel. The amount of time that it took to review the RFP for Meshacket was inappropriate and a lot of the delays for Meshacket along the way were associated with the current town counsel. The Committee agreed to revisit this topic at the next meeting.

Tim Rush confirmed with the Committee that he would like to be reappointed to the Affordable Housing Trust and the Community Preservation Committee. The administrator agreed to contact Kristy Rose to accommodate the reappointments.

There were no new demo delays.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Arielle Faria