

Edgartown Affordable Housing Committee Meeting

Tuesday August 17, 2021 at 5:00 PM

Members in Attendance: Mark Hess, Tim Rush, Christina Brown, Jason Mazar-Kelly

Chairman Hess opened the meeting at 5:00 PM.

Minutes: Tim Rush moved to approve the July 20, 2021 minutes. Christina Brown seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Hess stated that he would start with New Business so that Laura Silber of CCMVHB (Coalition to Create a Martha's Vineyard Housing Bank) could speak to the Committee about state legislation for a transfer fee. The administrator introduced Ms. Silber and reiterated that Ms. Silber would be speaking to the Affordable Housing Committee about the transfer fee legislation for the AHC to endorse, specifically because without a transfer fee there will not be consistent funds received on behalf of island affordable housing at all. Ms. Silber thanked the Committee for allowing her to be present at the meeting specifically to ask for endorsement for the transfer fee bills. Ms. Silber explained that there are 3 proposed transfer fee bills currently being presented at the state legislature, one being the H-2895 proposed by Representative Dylan Fernandes and Representative Liz Malia this is the bill that sets the exemption threshold at one million dollars with a .5-2 percent transfer fee with a local opt-in option. A locality would need to opt-in to decide to implement it. A region or locality could choose to raise the threshold but it could not go lower. The second and third bill are the house and senate version of the same bill, H-1377 and S868 Mike Connelly and Senator Joanne Comerford. These bills have similar provisions as the Fernandes/Malia bill but the exemption threshold is set at the state median which is currently \$503,000.00. There is still an opportunity for a locality to raise that exemption threshold. The hope at the legislature is that they will combine both bills and attach it to another housing package as there was a very large housing package in the works before the pandemic which was shelved. Ms. Silber discussed further possibilities of how the bills could be fashioned at the state legislature. The Fernandes/Malia bill had an early hearing in the Revenue Committee with only forty-eight hours' notice, which is why she has come before the AHC as CCMVHB was able to come before a couple of other boards before the hearing to request endorsement. It is very important, to move the bill forward that the legislature hear from municipalities across the state to support them reporting this bill favorably out of Committee.

Chairman Hess asked if the administrator had any reason that the Committee would not support the endorsement of these bills or the housing bank. The administrator replied that while she is in full support of the creation of the housing bank, it is necessary to endorse the transfer fee legislation to secure any potential future affordable housing revenue. The administrator went on to say that without the transfer fee there will be no consistent funding mechanism for the housing bank and it wouldn't even be a possibility for municipalities to receive the funds either.

Chairman Hess made a motion that the Administrator will write a letter of support and endorsement of the transfer fee legislation to be approved by the Committee before it is sent out. Christina Brown seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Tim Rush made a motion to endorse both the transfer fee and the Coalition to Create a Martha's Vineyard Housing Bank in a letter from the Committee. Jason Mazar-Kelly seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The Chairman and Committee thanked Ms. Silber for her presentation and continued work for the Coalition and affordable housing on the island.

The Chairman requested that the administrator give her update on the Meshacket RFP process.

The administrator informed the Committee that she would be doing a site walk with developers the following day, outlining the boundaries of the property. The administrator added that because there was only one group attending the question and answer session, it was decided that the group and anyone else who might submit a proposal, would instead submit their questions in writing and they would be answered and sent to all that requested the RFP.

The administrator informed the Committee that the Chasin lot paper work was underway, town counsel is in the process of securing the title for the property and then will amend the deed rider to reflect the covenants for the property. After this process is completed the administrator will work with DCRHA on the lottery process.

The administrator asked if she could connect Mr. Mazar-Kelly with David Vigneault of DCRHA in regards to the Edgartown representative on the DCRHA board. Mr. Mazar-Kelly agreed to speak with Mr. Vigneault.

The Committee discussed putting together a letter to the town administrator and Select Board to inform them that the Committee would like to hire new counsel that specializes in affordable housing/municipal housing practices. The Chairman stated as the Meshacket project progresses, state legislation and other projects advance, that counsel that is specializes in these areas is pertinent. It will save money, time and the Committee will be able to get more definitive answers to affordable housing questions in a reasonable amount of time. With a firm that is on top of state legislation and our regional needs, the Committee could do more in a timelier manner.

The Committee discussed how demo delays work with Jason Mazar-Kelly. Tim Rush made a motion to pass on 3 Duarte Circle. Christina Brown seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Arielle Faria