

Edgartown Affordable Housing Committee Meeting

Tuesday October 19, 2021 at 5:00 PM

Members in Attendance: Chairman Mark Hess, Tim Rush, Christine White, Melissa Vincent, Maria Ventura, Jason Mazar-Kelly

Chairman Mark Hess opened the meeting at 5:00 PM.

Minutes: Maria Ventura moved to approve the September 28, 2021 minutes. Tim Rush seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Meshacket project update: The administrator informed the Committee that the bid opening would be taking place that coming Friday, October 22, 2021 at 2 PM via Zoom. Jennifer Smyth (the procurement officer) would be opening the proposals, making sure they meet the outlined threshold and distributing the proposals to the Selection Committee members. The administrator also informed the Committee that the Meshacket Selection Committee would be holding their first meeting and orientation on Thursday October 21, 2021 at 5 PM. Chairman Hess commented that he was pleased with how everything is coming together and moving along.

CPC applications for Affordable Housing, DCRHA present: The administrator went over the AHC presentation for Meshacket stating the request for additional funding (in the amount of \$250,000) for roads, utilities and permits. The administrator also stated that she is waiting on a new estimate for the roads from Doug Hoehn. The Chairman stated that with all of the funding requests this year that the project may not receive the requested amount but hopefully an appropriate amount will be offered toward the project. The administrator stated that with the growing costs of building materials, any amount will surely be appreciated by whomever builds the project. Tim Rush mentioned to the administrator that in the past there had been questions about using CPC funding from mixed threshold projects and if that was possible. The administrator replied that there are ways to use CPC funds for mixed threshold developments and it just requires some creative thinking on the developer's part. Chairman Hess agreed that was indeed the case.

David Vigneault joined the meeting to speak about DCRHA's request for CPC funding for rental assistance. Mr. Vigneault stated that the need for rentals is still great, although he is impressed that there are still 60 landlords still in the program. There was further discussion with the Committee and Mr. Vigneault about the need for more rentals on island and how that has effected the workforce in Edgartown and on island in general.

Chasin/Litchfield lot update: Mr. Vigneault went over with the Committee the terms of the property both stated in the covenants and the MVC ruling. The Committee also discussed local preferences and a higher AMI to accommodate building expenses as well as to serve a broader range of the community. Mr. Vigneault also assured the Committee that year round occupancy/primary domicile is clearly defined as 11 months in a given year. Mr. Vigneault will send along a copy of the information packet to the administrator to review with the Committee when it is complete.

High Street: The Chairman moved the High Street discussion forward to have Mr. Vigneault present for the discussion. The Chairman explained the ongoing reports that 65 Pease's Point Way is empty the majority of the past few years. The Chairman believes the owner presented a false affidavit which has legal implications. Mr. Vigneault commented that in conjunction with town counsel, the definition of occupancy was clearly spelled out for the Chasin lot property. Full time occupancy equates to eleven months of the year.

Margaret Serpa informed the Committee that she was present when the property was given out and she believes the condition was that there could only be a two-week period in which the owner was occupying the home. Ms. Serpa continued that she walks by every day. Firemen and EMT's that drive past are aware the property is empty also and they could be living there. Ms. Serpa went on to say that she knows the owner is not occupying the space and something needs to change. The Chairman reiterated these points. Mr. Vigneault discussed his understanding of the owner's position and then asked if CHAPA and town counsel were advised on the subject. The administrator replied that she had engaged with CHAPA on numerous occasions on the subject but they unfortunately did not have much to offer in the way of guidance. CHAPA advised the Committee to have the owners sign affidavits stating that their homes were their primary residences, which the owners did. Town counsel was concerned that they would need tangible evidence in order to force a sale Mr. Vigneault offered his assistance in any way possible. There was a brief discussion reiterating points already made.

Mr. Vigneault announced that Jason Maza-Kelly would be recommended to the board of DCRHA and that he would be speaking to Jason within the week about details.

Municipal Housing Position and new committee designation: The Chairman discussed the ongoing process of creating the new professional position. Chairman Hess mentioned having discussions with James Haggerty and Kim Lucas about the position and the Committee seems pretty clear what the recommendation to the Select Board will be. There will need to be a letter to the Select Board and the Board will hopefully get behind the decision. The Chairman continues that there were many valid reasons to create this position and did anyone have anything to add. The administrator asked if she could add that she had inquired to other towns with some similarities to Edgartown about their job descriptions and pay scales for the Housing positions. The administrator hopes to get more and will work with Kim Lucas to find an appropriate salary range for this position. The Committee had a brief conversation about the process of having the Committee fall under the umbrella of the town and having the administrative positions paid by the general fund. The Chairman then explained that regardless of that process the current administrator should be compensated for the extensive work she does on many fronts for affordable housing currently and moving forward. It should also be considered that the current housing crisis as well as the many different fronts that need to be addressed to alleviate the challenges go beyond what a volunteer committee can manage. There must also be someone in this position that can make more definitive decisions on a day to day basis. The administrator stated that she would collect more data and speak with Kim Lucas to get a pay scale so that the position can be established.

New Business:

Conversation on the transfer fee in the municipality: The administrator informed the Committee that she, Julie Fay (Co-chair of the Coalition to Create a Martha's Vineyard Housing Bank) and Laura Silber (Coalition Coordinator for the Coalition to Create a Martha's Vineyard Housing Bank), had a positive conversation with Art Smadbeck about the transfer fee legislation as well as the Town's potential endorsement of the transfer fee. The administrator stated that Mr. Smadbeck had a lot of great questions which were answered and anything he needed in hand to show the Select Board was sent along. There will be a vote in the next Select Board meeting and the administrator encouraged Committee members to attend and show their support.

Demo Delays:55 Kings Point Way, 24 Turkeyland Cove: The Committee discussed the properties, the administrator mentioned that Christina Brown made the suggestion that town land be used to move some demo delays so they can be used on vacant lots the Committee acquires. Tim Rush commented that from the outside, a lot of these houses might look okay to move but on the inside it may not be as nice, the expense that goes with moving a house and then making sure there is no lead paint or molds etc. make it a risky endeavor. Tim Rush made a motion to pass on both demo delays. Christine white seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Arielle Faria