

Edgartown Affordable Housing Committee Meeting Minutes
August 20, 2024 at 4:45 PM
Edgartown Town Hall

Members in Attendance: Chairman Mark Hess, Vice-Chairman Jason Mazar-Kelly,
Melissa Vincent, Casey O'Connor, Maria Ventura

Others in Attendance: Donna Goodale, Laura Silber, David Vigneault, Arthur Smadbeck, Justin Kush,
Shanette Deleon

Chairman Mark Hess called the meeting to order at 4:45 p.m.

Minutes: Mr. Chairman started with July 9, 2024 meeting minutes. Melissa Vincent motioned to approve the July 9, 2024 meeting minutes. Maria Ventura seconded the motion. Three members voted yea and two abstained due to not being present at that meeting. Motion carried.

Old Business: 294 Chappaquiddick (Chappy) Lot Project Update – It was announced that Vineyard Land Surveying & Engineering (VLSE) next steps is the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) filing. It was noted that VLSE inquired if the Committee had any idea or guidance on structure(s) for this project. The Committee decided that they do not have sufficient information at this time to provide guidance, as it depends on the buildable lot size. The Committee expressed a desire to maximize usage, noting that the Board of Health indicated the property could accommodate 8 to 10 bedrooms maximum. The Edgartown Affordable Housing (EAH) Manager was tasked with conveying this information to VLSE.

Housing Heroes Update – Currently there is one Edgartown Housing Hero. The Committee has decided to wait until they have the Housing Hero Certificate before requesting to be added to the Selectboard agenda.

Meshacket Update – It was announced that a groundbreaking ceremony for Meshacket is scheduled for September 19, 2024 at 3:30 p.m. It was asked if a public meeting prior to the groundbreaking ceremony would be helpful. After discussion, it was decided that this is unnecessary, as the public is already aware of the Meshacket project and there is no additional information, such as when the public can start submitting application.

Affordable Housing Property Tax Exemption – Ms. Goodale, the President of Edgartown Town Assessor Board, opened the discussion by asking, how would the program be funded by the Town or by the State? The response indicated that it would likely be funded by the Town. Further questions were raised such as is it worth it? Mr. Vice-Chair responded we would need to run the numbers to figure out if it's worth it or not? The follow-up question was what process would be used to figure out if it's worth it or not? The response was we currently have 11 Landlords from the rental program that we can utilize their numbers to come up with the figure and request from Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC) a research including other small towns that already are using this program. Another question was, why would the Town voluntarily give up tax revenue to the current 11 landlords who already are in the rental program? The response was the 11 landlords data would be used to figure out if the numbers are worth going ahead with this program. Also it is easier to get people with property versus getting new housing that takes forever. Maybe this homeowner incentive can produce more landlords for renters. Mr. Vice-Chair gave an example stating that majority of the responders from the Housing Heroes program asked for more than the rental program prices and this program could be the incentive to get more landlords. Mr. Vigneault from Dukes County Regional Housing Authority (DCRHA) reported that he already provided the 11 landlord data to the Edgartown Town Assessor. After discussion, the Committee decided to request the research from MVC, obtain the 11 landlords data from Dukes County Regional Housing Authority (DCRHA) and the updated tax figures from the Town Assessors office.

New Member (Justin Kush) – The Chairman welcomed Justin Kush as the newest member of the Edgartown Affordable Housing Committee. It was noted that Mr. Kush has not yet been sworn in, therefore is not permitted to vote.

Housing Needs Assessment & Affordable Homes Act (Laura Silber) – Ms. Silber began by commending the Edgartown Affordable Housing Committee for supporting the Affordable Homes Act. She reported the Affordable Homes Act was passed and all towns in Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket will automatically receive the seasonal community designation. She referenced the seasonal community designation language documents that were circulated at the meeting. This designation will allow the towns to do the following: (1) establish year-round housing trust fund without requiring the home rule process; (2) acquire year-round housing occupancy restrictions to build middle-income year-round housing; (3) develop housing units specifically for public employees, including municipal employees. The question was raised if the Town can now use its land to build housing for their municipal employees. Ms. Silber confirmed yes, it could; (4) the program requires adopting bylaws or ordinance encouraging tiny homes and undersized lots for year-round housing; (5) to increase the residential property tax exemption for primary homes of year-round residents up to 50%. The Affordable Homes Act also provide support such as: The Office of Livable Communities and Community Services offering technical assistance, support to rural and seasonal communities as they implement housing solutions. The Seasonal Communities Advisory Council to provide advice and recommendations on policies and programs for the seasonal communities. The Committee decided to follow-up with Town counsel on how the Affordable Homes Act will impact the decision to raise the maximum allowable for the Trust. It was suggested to get this done in time for the next town meeting.

Ms. Silber explained although the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) by Right law was already passed at the State level and will take effect in February 2025, the Seasonal Housing passed bill is not at the same level and doesn’t have a start date. However, towns will still have some rights from the ADU by Right law such as restriction against Short-term Rentals. MVC has the zoning analysis and is creating a model bylaw which they hope to have ready in 3 to 4 weeks. Ms. Silber suggested that towns of Martha’s Vineyard need to file a Housing Production Plan with the State. After discussion, the Committee supported this suggestion and decided to request that Ms. Silber be placed on the Selectboard Agenda to present it.

New Business: Small Lot Donation (37 Twentieth Street North) – This item tabled to next meeting.

Correspondence: Maria Ventura made a motion to accept the demolition letters for both 149 West Tisbury Road and 7 Curtis Lane in Edgartown. Jason Mazar-Kelly seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of demolition of 149 West Tisbury Road and for 7 Curtis Lane four members voted in favor and Mark Hess abstained. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Shanette Deleon



Edgartown Affordable Housing Committee

- Chairman Mark Hess
- Vice-Chair Jason Mazar-Kelly
- Casey O’Connor
- Melissa Vincent
- Maria Ventura



Date of Approval