

Edgartown Affordable Housing Committee Meeting

March 5, 2014 at 3:30 PM

Members in Attendance: Chairman Mark Hess, Tom Soldini, Christina Brown, Tim Rush, Melissa Vincent, Joseph Roberts

Members Absent: Christine White

Chairman Mark Hess opened the meeting at 3:30 PM.

The Committee made several amendments to the minutes from February 5th for clarification. Tom Soldini made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Christina Brown seconded, and unanimously the amended minutes were unanimously approved.

There was one change on each of the two letters to be sent to the Selectmen, the ZBA and Kathleen Farrell. The letter to the Selectmen on the new guidelines for Zoning Bylaw 11.20.a.3 added the phrase “for your approval” in the opening paragraph. The letter to Kathy Farrell clarified that any major improvements made to the home need to be approved by EAHC prior to construction.

Harriet Hoar approached the Committee with concerns about the Haven Realty Trust project of the Edgartown Loft apartments at the Triangle. This project has been recommended to the MVC by the Edgartown Planning Board. Mrs. Hoar’s main concern is about traffic issues. The project proposes 20 units, which could be an additional 40 vehicles in an already crowded lot; the plans only call for an added 10 parking spaces.

The wording in the Haven Realty Trust proposal implies that some, if not all, of the apartments would be deemed affordable; but Mr. Hajjar, nor anyone else involved with this project, has approached the EAHC. The Committee recommended that at least a percentage of the apartments be affordable in perpetuity at the Planning Board meeting on June 24, 2013. The Committee recommends enforcing a lease of at least a year, to prevent weekly and monthly rentals. Mrs. Hoar added that with a private contract, there could be no town enforcement, nor was there any mention in the deeds that in the early dates these properties had a perpetuity agreement.

The Committee will write letters to the MVC and express concerns; the Commission wants feedback from Town Boards. The Committee also encouraged Mrs. Hoar to take an active part in this project by encouraging the traffic study. Tom Soldini recommended focusing on the Commission, and challenging the affordability aspect. The Committee will attend the MVC’s public hearing for this project and have a letter drafted for the next meeting.

Several persons have contacted the office inquiring about properties. There is currently no waiting list, since there are no properties available. The Committee discussed keeping a list of interested persons to be contacted when a property does become available; however, this becomes a liability should they be overlooked. It was recommended that the website be modified to include a current events and inventory section, with a few sentences explaining each project.

The Committee recommended that the Trust purchase a new desk for the Affordable Housing office. The assistant will begin to search for a suitable replacement. Tim Rush made a motion for this recommendation, Christina Brown seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

The current issues at Morgan Woods were addressed. The property replaced their Executive Director six months ago. The Executive Director (who handles the financials) does not currently live on the property, as was previously approved by the Committee with the new hire. The Property Manager (who handles custodial duties, snowplowing and other landscaping responsibilities), did live on site, but was fired recently for medical reasons. The administration is currently looking for a new Property Manager, and would like to hire someone that doesn't live on site, allowing for an additional apartment to rent, and through those savings would like to hire a Resident's Service individual (who would handle social issues like employment opportunities, fuel assistance, health care support, etc.). The Committee acknowledged that this new position is immensely beneficial to the Morgan Woods community, but recognized that not having any management on site would be detrimental. Melissa Vincent moved that one person be required to remain on the premises, either the Executive Director or the Property Manager, as per original agreement. Tom Soldini seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved. Mark Hess will call tomorrow to inform Morgan Woods of this decision, and a letter will be drafted for the next meeting. Christina Brown recommended that the letter stress the importance of the Resident Services position, but also emphasize the Committee's hesitations of not having any management on-site.

Tom Soldini recommended having the Morgan Woods administration come before the Committee once a year for a review, as per the original agreement. Mr. Soldini is interested in the financial aspects of the project; Christina Brown is interested in the social problems. Mark Hess will invite the administration to come before the Committee in June.

Tom Soldini and the assistant will be meeting with key persons involved in the Morgan Woods RFP; e.g. Marilyn Wortman, Janet Hathaway, Christina Brown, Alan Gowell, etc. to determine the order of events, and their opinion of the process to see if they would have handled anything differently. Jen O'Hanlon, the Town's Procurement Officer will be attending the next meeting to talk about the Meshacket RFP, the Archaeology Survey, grants involved, and general feasibility. Melissa Vincent will also supply other RFPs with different parameters for ideas.

The Committee decided that Melissa Vincent and the assistant will arrange a meeting with Phillippe Jordi, of the Island Housing Trust, to discuss funding and RFP processes. The Committee discussed holding an open forum about Meshacket to inform the public of current standing on the project. Melissa Vincent suggested holding a public meeting once the RFP has been distributed. The Committee decided to finalize a concept for the public for the next meeting; and how it should be presented, whether as an ad in the paper, a website update, or arranging time with the assistant for record of proceedings.

The Annual Town Meeting is on April 14th. Mark Hess will not be present; Tim Rush will be presenting the warrants for CPC funds for infrastructure, design and research. The next Committee meeting will be on March 19th at 3:30 PM.

The meeting adjourned at 5:01 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lucy Morrison