

Edgartown Affordable Housing Committee Meeting November 19, 2014 at 3:30 PM

Members in Attendance: Chairman Mark Hess, Tim Rush, Christina Brown, Melissa Vincent, and Sheylah Callen

Members Absent: Christine White, and Joseph Roberts

Others in Attendance: Christine Flynn, MVC; Peter Temple, MV Donors Collaborative; Dean Rosenthal, Edgartown Resident; and Margaret Serpa

Chairman Mark Hess opened the meeting at 3:37 PM.

Peter Temple and Christine Flynn presented a power point titled “*Housing & Our Growing Elder Population.*” The focus was to address the aging population of the island, and how it will affect the affordable housing market in the future. The presentation made the following points:

- The island will outpace both the national and the statewide aging trend. The current over-age 65 population is estimated to almost triple by 2060; 1 person in 3 will be over 65 by 2030.
- Elders qualify as very low income: almost half earn less than \$35,000 annually; and a third earn less than \$25,000 annually.
- The island needs well-sited affordable housing: access to public transportation, medical care, socialization, etc. Housing for caretakers – workforce housing – is also needed.
- The Housing Needs Assessment was completed before these numbers were received, and does not accurately reflect the need for elderly housing.

The island workgroups are finding ways to:

- Modify the existing housing stock to be friendly for elders.
- Develop infrastructure to assist the growing elderly population
- Attract people to the island to fill the increasing number of care related jobs
- **Create zoning incentives for developers and homeowners to promote affordable housing.**

The MVC recently published a document that outlines 28 zoning factors favorable to the creation of affordable housing. The provisions include suggestions like: accessory units and in-law apartments permanently restricted for affordable use/caregiver use; and conversions to multi-unit dwellings. The concept of visitability, accommodations for those with mobility impairments, was also emphasized. Visitability is similar to Universal Design, but with more specific parameters. Mr. Temple recommended that as the document is reviewed, to think about the bylaws that could be modified to help the situation; and to prioritize by political difficulty. He stated that the healthy aging taskforce will assist in any way possible. He stated further that it is critical to build outreach and political support for these zoning changes, and would like to create a sub-taskforce for each town.

Mark Hess stated that the Committee will review the documents presented. He also mentioned that it would be helpful to have the healthy aging taskforce give an opinion on what would be best suited for the senior buildings on the Meshacket property. Estimation on the physical characteristics of the buildings, number of units, number of bedrooms, income qualifications, etc. would be useful. Peter Temple stated that the mix of senior housing with other types of affordable housing will create an active community, and could serve as a new example of island living. Mr. Temple mentioned that the

development is pretty far out of town, and said he would look into ways to mitigate the disadvantages of the site.

Christina Brown moved to approve the minutes from November 5th as written. Mark Hess abstained. Tim Rush seconded. Sheylah Callen noted a change of a figure of \$300,000 to \$400,000. The minutes were unanimously approved as amended, 4-0, with one abstention.

Dean Rosenthal was present to show interest in becoming the alternate member to the Committee. He currently lives in a winter rental, and then moves off-island for the summer due to the escalating cost of housing. He is specifically interested in working on the Meshacket development as well as other projects in Edgartown. Mark Hess stated that the Committee serves as an advisory committee to the Selectmen; oversees and decides on existing affordable housing properties of different types.

The Committee discussed developments with the Meshacket project. Mark Hess stated that the updated Meshacket plan will downsize the number of bedrooms slightly, and will be more innovative, incorporating several types of housing. He stated that it is important for the property to serve a maximum benefit to the community and be a good model for future developments. For the next meeting, a better idea of the breakdown of units and income qualifications will be determined.

Christina Brown mentioned using MHP and DCHD as resources to find what types of funding are available for projects. She emphasized that it is not necessary for the Committee members to understand the complexities of subsidies; but need to consult with people who do.

The assistant will email the current draft of the Meshacket RFP to members for an update.

The Committee continued the discussion of re-opening the Buy-Down Program. Margaret Serpa commented that it is in the best interest of the Committee to concentrate on the Meshacket project. Tim Rush noted the current lack of housing stock available to qualify for the program. Mark Hess stated that more could be done with the amount of money the Buy-Down would require in another type of program.

The Committee applauded the Buy-Down Program as an innovative way to deal with the housing stock that was available at the time. However, due to the available housing stock, and the current focus of the Committee, it was decided to not reactivate the Buy-Down Program at this time.

Christina Brown mentioned that the MVC will be reviewing affordable housing policies in January.

The next meetings were scheduled for Dec 10th and 17th at 3:30 PM. The Selectmen will be invited to one or both meetings to follow-up on the Meshacket and 6th Street concepts.

Mark Hess moved to adjourn. Tim Rush seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lucy Morrison