



Housing Committee

Town of Chilmark

MEETING NOTES - FINAL

April 14, 2022 (via ZOOM)

Present for the Housing Committee and attending the Zoom meeting were Jim Feiner - Chair, Andrew (Andy) Goldman, Bill Rossi, Ann Wallace, Allison Cameron Parry, Nettie Kent Ruel and Alison Kisselgof - Administrator. Peter Cook, Sean Slavin and Jefrey DuBard were also in attendance.

The meeting came to order at 9:01 AM.

SLAVIN REFINANCE REQUEST: Jim started by mentioning the last request by the Slavins to take out a line of credit in 2020 was calculated incorrectly at 150% AMI, instead of their original financing at 120% AMI. He was unsure how this occurred. He said that the calculation done at the correct AMI for the current request show the refinancing amount works within the parameters of the allowable threshold.

Bill asked what the amount to refinance. Sean said that they were looking refinance a total of \$401,000 to consolidate current debt and change their mortgage to 15 years at a lower interest rate.

Ann offered that the Select Board meets on 4/19/22 and could vote on the Slavin refinance at this time.

A motion was made to recommend approval of the refinancing request to the Select Board. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

ACCESSORY APARTMENT/GUESTHOUSE SIZE CONTINUED DISCUSSION: Ann and Peter have been researching this topic for the Planning Board and created a handout. They specifically looked at West Tisbury's by-laws.

Ann said that the Planning Board is still discussing this topic and no decisions have been made. She said that the next step would be to have a joint meeting between the Housing Committee and Planning Board. Peter added that after the parameters were discussed and decided, the next step would be a public hearing.

Bill offered that family compounds could be another solution towards increasing housing affordability and eliminating housing insecurity. He felt that increasing the size to 1000 or 1200 square feet is more practical than limiting the size to 800 square feet. Bill recounted that this topic was discussed by the Planning Board previously and no action was taken at that time. He mentioned that the discussion was more about the character of Chilmark than providing housing to the families of the town but that the conversation was pre-pandemic and the housing situation has changed.

Jim suggested that the character of Chilmark be defined and updated to current & future situations. He said that it is common for people disagreeing with affordable housing to use this notion as a means to argue against it. Jim wondered if the issue was aesthetic or social. Bill and Ann both expressed the opinion that it was both.

Jefrey offered his perspective as a member of the Affordable Housing Committee in West Tisbury involved in the drafting of the by-law about accessory dwelling units (ADUs). He felt that limiting ADUs to 80% AMI is a flaw because it does not make creation of this type of housing appealing. Jefrey plans to introduce a higher AMI to the committee. He mentioned that he has layouts for various sizes of housing he would be willing to share.

There was a discussion about multi-family housing and whether it should be a separate discussion from the size of accessory apartments and guesthouses. Bill felt that both types of housing would help with the housing crisis and would need changes to zoning to accomplish and therefore the topics are connected.

Peter suggested that a Planning Board draft memo be shared with the Committee since it contains the steps of changing the by-laws and touches upon some of the ideas discussed in the meeting so far. He said that the memo ties together many of the discussions regarding solutions to affordable housing on the island.

Ann mentioned that the West Tisbury by-law has a few distinct differences from Chilmark's by-law – there is no mention of guesthouse but instead subordinate dwelling, the maximum size is 1000 square feet, the minimum lot size is 4.5 acres and owners cannot have both a guesthouse and detached bedroom.

Bill said that the goal is to increase the size of both guesthouses and accessory apartments to make them more practical and therefore the by-laws would get used more often.

Ann offered that there is little evidence that efforts to increase affordable housing have led to more available units and, in fact, data shows these units end up going to family. Nettie recounted that most of the affordable units in West Tisbury were being used by family. Jeffrey mentioned that a flaw of the West Tisbury by-law for accessory dwelling unit was that it was not restricted and, as a result, the units were used for family and friends instead of workforce as the town had hoped.

Nettie asked if all guesthouses would be allowed a larger size even if they aren't used for year round housing. Bill did not believe that a guesthouse could be restricted in this way but could perhaps be prevented from being rented short term or seasonally.

Jim mentioned that the town could use special permits to allow expansion of a guesthouse if used for affordable housing. He said there would be need to an oversight authority to prevent abuse and suggested that Dukes Country Regional Housing Authority could assist. This is similar to a process in which Jim is currently involved in Vineyard Haven.

HOMESITE SALE PRICE CONTINUED DISCUSSION: This topic was skipped and will be included on the next meeting agenda.

MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING CONTINUED DISCUSSION: Jim said that the West Tisbury multi-family by-law allows for at least one house per acre on a multi-acre parcel provided that 2/3 of the houses are for affordable housing. He felt Chilmark should seriously consider incorporating a similar by-law and wondered what could be done to get this accomplished.

Ann said that she felt this topic could be included in the Planning Board's discussion on accessory apartment/guesthouse sizes.

Bill suggested circulating the West Tisbury and Tisbury multi-family by-laws for the Committee to review.

Allison asked what the proposal would be for multi-family zoning. Jim offered the West Tisbury by-law would allow for 3 buildings on 3 acres is similar in density to Chilmark zoning which allows for a main dwelling plus a guesthouse and a detached bedroom. He felt that the rules wouldn't need to change. Allison offered that allowing a larger accessory apartment would essentially be the main difference between the towns' by-laws.

Jeffrey asked if there was any discussion about allowing multi-family housing on lots with more than one existing buildings as a mechanism to increase housing availability while not increasing density. He gave the example of 135 Middle Road, which includes 4 pre-existing buildings. Bill didn't feel there would be a lot of properties that would fall under this category.

Ann recounted a conversation with Jessica Roddy who helped write the by-laws. Ann asked Jessica why the by-law stated explicitly that both a guesthouse and accessory apartment were allowed. Jessica's answer was that, if given the choice between the two, most would choose a guesthouse and therefore far less accessory apartments would be created.

Andy suggested that the Housing Committee write a proposal to bring to the Planning Board joint meeting. Bill offered to help Andy in writing a proposal.

PEAKED HILL PASTURES UPDATE: A handout was written by the Planning Board to give to voters at town meeting to explain the Peaked Hill Pastures warrant article. Peter said there were also presentation points written if questions were asked on the town floor.

TOPICS NOT ANTICIPATED: Andy asked about the related warrants for the upcoming town meeting so that Committee members were aware and could offer support. Bill answered that the Peaked Hill Pastures design concept is included. Ann added that the setbacks for undersized lots was also on the warrant.

Nettie wondered what else the Committee could do to support the Housing Bank. Jim and Bill felt there was already ample support from the town. Jim offered that a good, concise set of answers to questions on the town floor could sway people on the fence.

Ann asked if the vote on the Housing Bank would negatively affect the vote on Peaked Hill Pastures. Others on the Committee felt these were separate issues and would not conflict.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: A motion was made to accept the draft minutes from the meetings on 2/17/22 and 3/17/22 as written. The motion was seconded. A vote for each set of minutes passed unanimously (Jim abstained from voting on the 3/17/22 minutes since he was absent).

DOCUMENTS:

Slavin Refinancing Worksheet

Planning Board draft memo RE accessory apartments & guesthouse size

ATM Warrant Article 25 Handout

Draft minutes from 2/17/22 & 3/17/22 Meetings

NEXT POSSIBLE MEETING: May 19, 2022 @ 9:00 AM via Zoom.

With no further business to conduct the meeting adjourned at 10:07 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Alison Kisselgof, board administrator.