



Housing Committee Town of Chilmark

MEETING NOTES - DRAFT April 18, 2024 (via ZOOM)

Present for the Housing Committee and attending the Zoom meeting were Jim Feiner – Chair, Ann Wallace, Allison Cameron Parry, Peter Cook, Bill Rossi and Alison Kisselgof - Administrator. Also in attendance was Laura Silber and Mark Leonard.

Nettie Kent Ruel was not in attendance.

MARTHA'S VINEYARD COMMISSION UPDATES: Three members of the Committee were present at the time that Laura Silber from the Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC) joined the meeting. While the Committee waited for a fourth member to join the meeting, Laura shared some MVC updates to those present.

Laura offered that the Massachusetts Secretary of Housing Edward Augustus will be visiting the island for a listening session on June 4th at Oak Bluffs Library. She said that it was very important that representatives from all town boards attend as well as people who are currently experiencing housing insecurities. Laura mentioned that she sent an invite to board administrators and asked that Alison forward that invite to the Committee members. The meeting requires pre-registration to attend.

The Executive Director of The Community Preservation Coalition Stuart Saginor is visiting the island for a training session on Community Preservation Committee (CPC) best practices. Laura will be co-presenting at the training session on May 30th at the West Tisbury EMS Building. She said that it is important for housing committee members to attend to learn how to maximize CPC funds.

Laura requested that the affordable housing inventory for each town be annually formalized, distributed and made publically available on the website. She offered that she has noticed a disconnect between the Select Board and town residents on what housing is available and expects this would help with this issue. Laura mentioned that Chilmark does not have any housing listed on the state's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) but the town does have a range of non-SHI housing. She mentioned that there is talk about changing the SHI inventory for seasonal areas and the range of non-SHI housing could assist the shaping these changes.

At 9:19 AM, Bill Rossi joined the meeting and a couple of minutes later Allison Cameron Parry entered. The meeting was officially started at 9:24 AM when a quorum of Committee members was reached.

Jim offered his thanks to Bill for his years of service to the town and the Committee.

OAK BLUFFS PILOT MUNICIPAL HOUSING PROGRAM: Mark Leonard, the chair of the Oak Bluffs Affordable Housing Committee, joined the meeting to present information on a pilot program recently started in Oak Bluffs to expand their rental assistance program (RAP). Mark said that the RAP program administered

through the Dukes Country Regional Housing Authority is limited to 80% AMI and the expanded program allows up to 120% AMI. He said that the idea was to attract more landlords into the program, which had been a slow process. The pilot program currently has 3 participants who are all employed in Oak Bluffs, but aren't all municipal employees. Tenants are capped at spending 30% of their income on rent and the town will subsidize up to 50% of the rent. Mark mentioned that long term funding of the program will need to come from their housing trust, which was recently increased to allow up to 150% AMI. He said that Terri at DCRHA has been very helpful in communicating between the landlords and tenants to negotiate the rent and the town subsidy amounts in addition to verifying income and doing reference checks. Mark offered that DCRHA involvement has boosted landlord confidence in the program. Two other details about the program that were mentioned is that the town pays the subsidy directly to the landlord and that a Facebook page is being used to promote the program.

Jim asked if testimonials from current participants would be collected - Mark answered yes and shared a story of one of the renters in the program. Peter wondered if the program was based on the Lease to Locals program. Mark said that they were aware of the Lease to Locals program when the pilot program was developed and the program are very similar. He offered that DCHRA's involvement was important – he believed that DCRHA could standardize the process amongst the towns. Jim asked how many rentals could be funded with the pilot program – Mark said that the pilot program was designed to support 5 rentals.

The Committee discussed what needed to be done to move forward with programs like an expanded RAP or Lease to Locals pilot, which are very different programs. Laura suggested that the Molly Flender Affordable Housing Trust (MFAHT) could be used for a pilot program without the need for a warrant at a town meeting. She also mentioned that 150% AMI is currently over market rate, which would allow funding of a pilot expanded RAP. Laura offered that the Committee could vote to initiate a discussion with the MFAHT to figure out the parameters of a program. She also said that working with DCRHA would be efficient since they are already set up for this type of program and that flyers about a pilot program could be included in the tax bill mailing for outreach, which proved to be very effective in Edgartown.

A motion was made to initiate a discussion with the MFAHT to develop a pilot program utilizing DCRHA as a resource. The motion was seconded and passed with all in favor (Bill did not vote because he was experiencing technical problems).

The Committee acknowledged that there would be a delay in starting the discussion with the MFAHT until after the town election but a proposal could be written in the meantime.

TOWN MEETING HANDOUT TO SUPPORT EXCISE INCREASE WARRANT: Alison had distributed a draft version of a handout written by Ann, which was based on the handout Edgartown had used at their town meeting. Ann mentioned that the Committee needed to vote to approve the handout and then it would need to be approved by the town moderator. She asked if Jim or Bill could answer any questions that come up at town meeting. Jim said that he was not able to attend town meeting. Bill was unavailable at this time to discuss. It was believed that the warrant would yield little discussion and that it might be enough to say that Chilmark is the last town on the Cape and Islands that has not raised the excise rate. Laura offered that someone should connect with Bill outside of the meeting to verify he can speak to the warrant should there be a need.

LEASE TO LOCAL PROGRAM DISCUSSION: Jim said that it would be useful to have a comparison of the Lease to Locals program, the Oak Bluffs pilot expanded RAP and Chilmark's RAP. Peter felt that pilot programs could be run in parallel to see which yields better results. Ann asked if there were materials on the Lease to Locals program to give to the new Select Board liaison - Alison said that she had two presentations and the recording of the Colin's presentation.

Laura offered that the distinction between the Lease to Locals and the expanded RAP is that the Lease to Locals program creates new rentals, whereas RAP is for existing rentals to help renters pay their rent. She supported Peter's idea of running programs simultaneously.

APPROVAL OF DRAFT MINUTES: A motion was made to accept the minutes from 2/15/24 & 3/21/24 meetings as presented and seconded. With no further discussion offered, a vote was taken and the motion passed with all in favor (Bill was not available to vote on this motion).

TOPICS NOT ANTICIPATED: Laura asked for an update on the Peaked Hill Pastures project. Alison offered that Ann Silverman was hired as a consultant to help finish up the Request for Proposals (RFP) for release. Once the RFP was released, a new implementation committee would be formed to finish the project. There was a conversation about what happens after the RFP is released and project funding. Laura offered that if the RFP did not receive any responses, the Town could solicit feedback from developers. She said that town counsel would know the proper procedure to do this. Allison offered to be on the implementation committee.

Laura asked that the SHI inventory be discussed internally. Jim asked what date the other towns were going to releasing their annual report and Peter wondered if there was a template. Laura answered that the state collects this information every year and this would be a good time to update the town's inventory summary and send her a copy. She suggested that Alison reach out to obtain the spreadsheets from Oak Bluffs and Edgartown as an example of format.

DOCUMENTS:

- Draft excise handout for town meeting
- Oak Bluffs expanded rental assistance program summary
- Draft minutes from the 2/15/24 & 3/21/24 meetings

NEXT POSSIBLE MEETING: April 18, 2024 @ 9:00 AM

With no further business to conduct the meeting adjourned at 10:25 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Alison Kisselgof, Board Administrator.