

**Affordable Housing Trust (AHT)**  
**Minutes**  
**Meeting of January 9, 2014**

**In Attendance:**

**Members Present:** George Sibley, Chair, Michael Luster, Betsy Works, MJ Boylan

**Members absent:** Ruth Pino

**Staff:** Tom Daniel, CD Director, Deborah Laurie, Sr Project Manager

**Others:** CPA member Bill Dugan, Housing Representative, Shelley Goehring, Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance (MAHA)

The Meeting was called to order at 5:05 pm.

First item on the agenda was the minutes from the November 14, 2013 meeting. Minutes were reviewed by members; Michael Luster motion to accept minutes as is and seconded by George Sibley. All in favor, yes; motion passed to accept minutes of November 14, 2013.

Guest Speaker Shelley Goehring from MAHA gave a brief introduction and proceeded with a power point presentation regarding Municipal Affordable Housing Trusts..

Ms. Goehring stated that having a planning process as a starting point was advisable. A Feasibility study or Housing document that identified the community's needs, such plans can include a Housing Needs Assessment, Housing Production Plan (DHCD), Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (MAHT) Action Plan, City's Master Plan and or a Community Preservation Plan (CPC) plan. This is a good place to start.

Ms. Goehring added that in most communities the CPC does not hand over funding on a yearly basis to the AHT. They prefer to keep the funds moving. In other towns, the CPC did give the 10% of housing funds to the AHT, however, the funds sit around due to no project activity or applicants. The CPC's started pushing back.

So, it is best to have a vision and a plan for your community. She described how the community of Medway developed their plan. They hired a part time Housing Coordinator, which was funded by the CPA. Their goals were to retain and create units for low income households; fund production of housing units; help promote other local affordable housing efforts, help homeowners stay in their homes and diversify Trust Fund Revenues. They established initiatives which included building capacity, identifying & acquiring land, support developers, assist in lotteries, monitoring and retain existing units. Some of the programs include buy downs, purchase and re sale, down payment and rental assistance. One example would be for the Trust to purchase a tear down and build a new home.

Ms. Goehring also gave some examples of other communities that utilize AHT funds such as Martha' Vineyard who chose to have a rental program that the Housing Authority manages; also many small communities on the Cape also do rental assistance, on a smaller scale than Martha's Vineyard.

Ms. Goehring talked about hiring staff, which becomes an advocacy to the Trust Committee. There are a wide variety of different things that the housing coordinator can assist with, such as advocacy, monitoring and developing programs.

Partnering with Housing Authorities was discussed. She spoke about two projects where this worked well; Cutler Heights in Holliston and Benfield Farms in Carlisle. Cutler Heights was a 30 unit rental project in which the Housing Authority manages. Benfield Farms, was a 26 unit designed to look like a New England farm house. A portion of the land was purchased with CPA funds and set aside for affordable housing.

Discussion continued on developing a housing plan. The need to update the data that the city already has was pointed out. It is important to have accurate and updated data to support affordable housing case. Action, Inc., Gloucester Housing Authority, Community Development's five year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans, are a good place to start.

Tom Daniels spoke about housing in the downtown area. Developing affordable housing in the Downtown area would be a good idea due to the fact that everything is within walking distance. A lot of affordable housing developments are too far from the downtown area and people with limited incomes have a hard time with transportation, jobs, services, etc. There needs to be a good balance.

There are some zoning hurdles that could be addressed to allow more affordable housing in the Downtown area. Another solution could be to develop housing just on the fringe of downtown. Maybe some smaller develops of 4 – 6 units could be supported. Affordable land availability is always an issue. Perhaps small underutilized buildings could be looked at.

George Sibley talked about the history of the AHT. The Mayor's office in the past had established an Affordable Housing Task Force, which is how the Trust was established. This happened before the CPA was adopted by the City in 2008. They actually have had only one funding source so far and have supported four projects to date on a small scale. The Trust has approximately \$250K to distribute.

The consensus of the group was that both Committees will work together and collaborate on projects. Possible projects were discussed such as Maplewood School, which was purchased by Kirk Noyes. The neighborhood isn't in agreement of what type of housing should be developed for that sight, so the project is delayed. It is believed that the developer wants to do 55 years and older, but not restricted. Another possible housing project could be the St. Ann's School. It is tied up for a few years with the West Parish School kids occupying until their new school is built, however, this would be a great affordable housing project. Harborlights has looked into this property for development.

It was determined that the Trust would like to meet one more time to discuss all the issues and ideas that have been discussed at this meeting. Also, perhaps bringing all the housing groups in Gloucester together to discuss more ideas and development options would be a good idea.

Motion to adjourn: George Sibley, seconded by Michael Luster, all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Deborah Laurie, Senior Project Manager for CDBG and CPA