

Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust

Minutes

January 21, 2015

Welcome – Chairman David Carey opened the meeting of the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust (Trust). Members Michael Lombardo, Marc Johnson, Peter Britton, Brian Stein, and Fred Mills were present. Also present were Rachel Meketon, Patrick Reffett, Mary Beth Lawton, Heather Ford, and Joe Hughes.

Introductions – Hughes is a Hamilton resident. He works for MassHousing and oversees compliance of 60,000 units of subsidized housing. The current members of the Trust offered Hughes background on the board.

Announcements – On January 20, Mills spoke at the Planning Board meeting and recommended that the Town accept a payment-in-lieu of developing affordable housing from C.P. Berry for their housing project on the former Patton property. The Board accepted the payment for \$156,000.

2013-14 Goals – Meketon described a hand-out with the Trust's 2013-14 goals and accomplishments based on her reading of the board's minutes. The group discussed and agreed that their main goal now is to find a property, find a partner (a nonprofit affordable housing developer), and pass the zoning to build 10-20 affordable units. Carey believes that they have succeeded in Goal One: "Maintain and Advance Local Capacity to Achieve Housing Production Goals". The Trust has support, and it has the resources that it needs to succeed. He suggested that we document the Trust's resources (the expertise of the Trust members, current and potential funds, relationships with nonprofits, local banks, Town committees and other contacts). For the second goal ("Create a Diversity of Housing Types to Meet the Needs of a Changing Population"), Carey suggested that each person describe what projects they would like to see.

Carey: Create housing for a full range of family types, sizes, incomes, locations. 3 or 4 projects with 4 to 12 units.

Hughes: Agree.

Mills: Agree. And better management of Chapter 61 land.

Lawton: Home Rehab Grant Program. Cottage-style rental units. Community land trust.

Britton: Improved zoning.

Ford: Focus on fewer goals.

Lombardo: Bylaw for cottage-style housing with an affordability component. Revolving loan program. Forgivable loan program.

Stein: McRae property (through Hamilton Development Corporation). Mixed-use zoning.

Johnson: Zoning for cottage-style housing, multi-family housing, and accessory apartments. Improved density requirements.

List of Properties to Pursue – Trust members discussed the possibility of creating a list of properties to pursue. Britton warned that property owners might not be comfortable with this.

Foreclosed Properties – Mills suggested that we focus on foreclosed and vacant properties. He asked Meketon to create a list of such properties. The Trust could investigate them, and if they are in poor condition, contact the Attorney General's office to gain control of them.

Housing Authority – Hughes asked if it would be possible to develop on Housing Authority land. Johnson replied that the Housing Authority only owns one piece of land and that it is currently occupied by housing that is in poor condition. Hughes suggested that the Trust could work to improve and expand the current housing. Trust members discussed the possibility of cultivating a relationship with the Housing Authority in order to pursue a project of that sort.

Home Rehabilitation Grant Program – Meketon shared the response to the program from the Department of Revenue, Town Counsel and the Massachusetts Housing Partnership. The program cannot be funded by the Trust because the Trust is limited to creating or preserving affordable housing, which is defined as adding housing to the Subsidized Housing Inventory or acquiring an affordability deed restriction on the property. The board members agreed that nobody would sign a deed restriction for just \$3,000.

Lombardo and Britton discussed their interest in making larger grants or loans of \$15-20,000 for capital improvements such as septic systems and roof repairs. The repair with or without a deed restriction could spare the home from demolition and prevent the construction of a significantly more expensive home in its place.

Ford brought up the HOME funds that were meant to pay for the Grant Program. Each year the Town is allocated approximately \$8,500 for affordable housing from the North Suburban HOME Consortium, but because the Town rarely has projects for the funds, they are returned to the general fund and used by other cities and towns. The rules that prevent the Trust from supporting the Grant Program may not apply to the HOME funds if they are processed by the Town rather than the Trust. Lombardo recommended that we use them that way and suggested that the Trust write a letter to the Board of Selectmen to encourage them to vote for that use of the HOME funds.

Adjourn – At 7:30 PM. Lombardo made a motion to adjourn. Britton seconded. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Rachel Meketon, Community Projects Coordinator

ATTEST: _____

David Carey, Chairman