



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

Affordable Housing Trust Fund
101 Main Street
Ashland, MA 01721

MINUTES

January 26, 2022

Trustees in attendance: Steve Greenberg, David Rosenblum, Bernadette Lunkuse, Alan Galiwango, Joe Magnani, Barbra Sekesogundo

Guests: Brandi Kinsman, Ellen Schachter and Hannah Carrillo who are Somerville advocates for affordable housing funding legislation, “Margy” muted and not showing video on Zoom

Trustees absent:

Zoom Meeting called to order at 5:01pm by Steve.

Motion to approve minutes of 12/7/21 meeting as written made by Joe seconded by Alan. Passed 5-0.

Hannah and Ellen told us about their organization, the Transfer Fee for Affordable Housing Coalition, advocating for funding of affordable housing. This would be through a transfer fee of between 0.5% and 2.0%. There would be a floor sales price that is the median home price for the state or for the county. Each city or town would decide whether they will implement this and each town can have different rules such as excluding sales of owner occupied dwellings.

Towns now can send a home rule petition to the legislature. 7 towns have done this, but the legislature has not yet approved any of these petitions.

Ellen told us that they are working on legislation to enable this. With this legislation any town could implement the transfer tax without legislative approval. She would like the Ashland Affordable Housing Trust to join the coalition which has 84 organizations in it now.

Steve asked about different rules a town could have. Ellen said that some towns were looking at a 6% fee for quickly sold (“flipping”) properties. Steve

asked if the funds would be subject to the same restrictions as CPA funding. The answer was no.

Alan commented on the flexibility that each town has. Ellen said that the town could set who would pay the fee: the buyer or seller. And perhaps exempt first time home owners. Alan asked who administers the rules. Ellen said that the Select Board would do this and that implementing the transfer tax would need an article on the town warrant.

Joe asked if this applied to sales of rental housing. The answer was yes, but the fee would not apply to the value of deed restricted affordable units. It was said that this might encourage more affordable units. Joe asked if there can be an owner age limit for this. The answer was yes.

Brandi said she and the Select Board were very concerned with keeping Ashland affordable. She asked how this has worked for towns such as Concord that was mentioned. Ellen said that this has not yet been implemented in any Massachusetts towns.

Bernadette asked about the web site for the coalition. It is <https://www.realestatetransferfee.org/>. David asked for clarification on the floor price. Homes selling for below the floor price would not subject to the transfer tax and for those properties above the floor price, the transfer tax would be calculated on the whole sales price including the floor price.

Ellen and Hannah left the meeting at 5:47pm.

Brandi updated us on the Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) being proposed for the town. She said that she was on the steering committee for this as are David and Steve. Right now there is a story board available online and a survey on the type of IZ wanted for the town. We should all complete the survey and encourage others to do this. Brandi asked what level of affordability we like. Joe and Steve said they liked the hybrid choice splitting 15% of units for 80% of AMI residents and 10% of units for 60% of units. Both are needed to provide workforce housing in Ashland.

Brandy suggested that the AHT come to a Select Board meeting to talk about what we do and what our goals are. Joe thought a joint meeting would be good. Steve suggested having a multi-board meeting. Kind of a volunteer breakfast format for certain boards/committees that work together.

We agreed that we would wait until the next meeting to consider joining the transfer tax coalition.

Our next meeting will be February 10th at 5pm on Zoom.

Steve said that there might be an affordable home for sale by the next meeting.

Joe commented that the AEF was not getting very many applications. We thought that more publicity would be good. David asked about our Rental Assistance program. Steve said that applications were coming in slowly.

Motion to adjourn made by David, seconded by Joe, passed 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 6:17 pm.

Documents discussed:

Transfer Fee Coalition presentation