



Town of Ashland

M A S S A C H U S E T T S

Affordable Housing Trust Fund
101 Main Street
Ashland, MA 01721

MINUTES

February 10, 2022

Trustees in attendance: Steve Greenberg, David Rosenblum, Bernadette Lunkuse, Joe Magnani, Barbra Sekesogundu

Guests: Jen Wuelfing, State Representative Jack Lewis

Trustees absent: Alan Galiwango

Zoom Meeting called to order at 5:05pm by Steve.

Motion to approve minutes of 1/26/22 meeting as written made by Joe seconded by Steve. Passed 4-0.

We talked about the Transfer Fee Legislation with Jack Lewis. Jack reminded us that 7 towns had filed home rule petitions to implement this, but none have been approved yet. The house bill for transfer fee has an extension until May to be brought out of committee. Jack is in favor of the legislation with it having flexibility for each town to implement it differently or not at all. Joe asked why a major Realtor group is against this. Steve thought that they were opposed because the more complications with a sale, the trickier the deal gets. Jack said that the house likes consensus with interested parties. Jack said he would talk to Senator Spilka and Rep Mike Conley about this. Steve said that this could be implemented by a town to exclude owner occupied homes and be as low as 0.5%. Jack left the meeting at 5:27pm.

Jen updated us on our rental assistance program. She said that the program administered by SMOC ended Dec. 31, 2021. Jen said that she has been getting non-COVID related applications and reminded us that our program is only for COVID related needs. Jen thought that the program was a Band-Aid and that housing costs in Ashland were becoming a chronic problem with \$2000 a month and greater rents. Jen mentioned that aid is available from the Ashland Emergency Fund (AEF) and St Vincent DePaul for utility bills

and other needs. Jen said we have one pending case for the AHT rental assistance program.

We discussed possible non-COVID assistance. Barbara said that all programs are good and benefit the town and the people living in it. Jen said that the AEF is available for many needs and the AHT is there to support affordable housing. Steve said that our assistance program was designed to be short lived. David asked Jen to get us AHT assistance numbers for our next meeting. Steve clarified that the AHT program applied to all Ashland residents, not just those in deed restricted homes. Jen left our meeting at 6:05pm.

Steve updated us on potential sale of 29 Americas Blvd. He said the paperwork was together and the sale will probably occur in the spring.

We noted that Steve replied to a recent email from Julie Nardone and that Julie had been communicating with the town planner about deed restricted homes in Ashland. Steve will handle questions from Margy Gassel about affordable housing, possibly invite her to our next meeting.

Joe brought up the issue with deed restrictions on 125 Front St. Steve will follow up on this.

Our next AHT meeting will be on March 3.

Motion to adjourn made by David, seconded by Joe, passed 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 6:21 pm.

Documents discussed: