

**TOWN OF TEWKSBURY
LOCAL HOUSING PARTNERSHIP MEETING
March 25, 2021**

Call the Meeting to Order

Due to the Open Meeting Law policy set forth by the Governor during the current State of Emergency the meeting will be held as a virtual meeting.

Ms. Reed called the meeting to order at 7:07pm. Members present at the meeting were Nancy Reed, Vincent Fratalia, Laura Caplan, Melissa Maniscalco, Anne Marie Stronach, Greg Peters and James McMullen. Also in attendance were Steve Sadwick and Anna McGinty.

1. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Mr. Fratalia made a motion to approve the Feb.16, 2021 meeting minutes. Mr. Peters seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved based on roll call with Nancy Reed, Vincent Fratalia, Laura Caplan, James McMullen, Greg Peters and Melissa Maniscalco voting to approve.

3. Discussion about Administrative Assistance and next steps for the Partnership.

Ms. Reed updated the committee on various discussions that she and Steve Sadwick had since the last meeting. These included: David Hedison, Chelmsford Housing Authority Kristen Guilard, Planning Director, Acton, Beverly Woods Ex. Dir., and Jay Donovan, NMCOG and the Town Manager.

David Hedison, Chelmsford Housing Authority uses his own Nonprofit- CHOICE Housing, leveraging DHCD money that becomes available once per year and you may not get the money on the first try, funds have to go to a nonprofit.

Kristen Guilard, Planning Director, Acton. They use Acton Community Housing Corporation – ACHC. It is a Nonprofit, quasi-public, housing corporation and the Board of Selectmen have authority, appointing the members and decisions regarding funding, similar to our committee. In Acton, they do not seek developers/development, but are 1st point of contact for new projects.

Beverly Woods Ex. Dir., and Jay Donovan, NMCOG

(Northern Middlesex Council of Governments, Regional Planning Agency)

They will work with the town on the town land Inventory update. They will look into Regional Housing Services Office, similar to Reading and Concord versions. Not much interest in that so far.

They will possibly help us with a template Request for proposals (RFP) for what we are looking to do with town owned land.

Mrs. Reed brought up for tonight's meeting discussion and asked that no decisions be made tonight for the members to think about the committees structure and role.

The set up of the Partnership committee can get the job done, in terms of working everything through the Board of Selectmen, as in using funds from the AHTF and appointments to the committee....similar to towns like Acton and other towns that have trustees rather than a committee...they still go through selectmen for everything.

For the committee structure, we could look at reducing the size of the committee from 7 members, plus a Selectmen to 5 members, plus a selectmen. Mrs. Reed mentioned that there is a need to update the committee's mission, and draft goals and objectives, as other committees in the town have these. Also, look at meeting twice per month again in order to get some momentum going. Mrs. Reed mentioned that she put a lot of information out there, but do any members have initial thoughts on any of this.

Greg mentioned that back in the beginning, we met twice per month, but had trouble getting a quorum. Many members never showed up at all. Vin asked what Steve Sadwick thought about the committee, he said that he wants to accomplish something and we sometimes are just spinning our wheels.

Mr. Sadwick said that as part of our discussions with the town manager, we over the history of the committee's 20 years. Greg and Nancy are from the original, when there were representatives from real estate and banking trades, who are sometimes on Partnerships for their input on housing. Then the committee shifted to a different model and sometimes work groups were formed for different tasks, and that was helpful. The last major initiative was the HUD 202 on Livingston Street, where Nancy and Corrine Delaney, the former Ex Dir of THA worked and completed that project. He agreed that there has been a lot of spinning of wheels over time. Vin agreed. Steve asked that members think about the Mission and what kind of representation on the committee supports it.

Anne Marie mentioned that she has been thinking a lot about the committee and having someone come in and help us. We aren't as effective as we could be. We do need to update our Mission, Goals and Objectives and probably need to meet twice per month to get that done. We then need to run these by other groups, BOS, Planning Brd., ZBA in order that folks know what we are doing and we get them onboard. We need additional help to make this a priority, we need to think about what we are going to do with the trust funds. We have the funds, we need to take advantage of our position. Greg thanked Anne Marie for her efforts of the committee, as she is the only Selectmen for a long time who has been here consistently.

Vin asked if we could think about using the Real estate and banking people for assistance and also, Mass Housing Partnership, who came to assist a couple years ago. He asked Anna, our town planner, what her thoughts are. Anna said that we should focus on 1 or 2 key projects for 6 months or so. If you have too many then it gets distracting. Vin said that made sense.

Steve said that it might be worth thinking about items for the goals for the next meeting and what we can do as a project. Nancy mentioned that she will look into getting some other town's missions, goals and objective as a reference.

Laura asked if there is an ideal size for the committee. Anne Marie said that its more about who is represented on the committee, rather than the number.

Greg said that when they first started the committee was too huge and folks did not show up, banker, school committee and BOS person never showed up and the Real Estate person was letting the right of first refusal go through as market rate, so we were losing units.

Nancy mentioned that she is interested in having input and advice from realtors and Bankers, but not as members, only as advisory, non-voting members, as they are sometimes in conflict areas. Anne Marie agreed.

Laura brought up the recent candidates night where 2 selectmen candidates said they were against having the fee in lieu option. She mentioned that we really need to keep that because it allows us to do positive things with the money for affordable housing. Nancy said that this is a bigger topic than what we can discuss and others have the decision on it. Vin said from the Planning Board side, he takes it on case by case basis, inclusion does not always work or fit into a development well, so the fee offers an option. Nancy mentioned that the fee needs to be used thoughtfully, we can get multiple units for each fee, but it something that we need to be proactive about. Melissa mentioned that schooling the candidates about the use of the fee might help. Nancy said jokingly that she thinks they were just saying something so that people will vote for them. James asked about the fee, Nancy explained the calculation and the rational for it. Vin added that it is great to have funds to do meaningful projects.

3. Trahan School Reuse discussion:

Mrs. Reed mentioned that the last she heard this topic would be going out to other committees from the Reuse Committee for input about uses. Steve mentioned that their next meeting is next week. Vin notes as an aside that Soldier On is interested in more sites in the town. Greg asked how large is the North Street school property. Ann Marie said that its only the area where the school is to the street that is buildable, the rest is wetlands, so it's fairly small. Greg mentioned that the Trahan is a great site, right on the bus line, maybe for senior housing. He wondered if Carnation Drive needs to be replaced as it is getting old. Melissa said its being kept up well, so it's all set.

5. Carter Street Lot discussion:

Mr. Sadwick said that this will be on the warrant. Vin asked about next steps once approved. Steve said it will go out on an RFP.

6. Other Business:

Vin noted that Soldier On presented to the BOS the other night and it went great, it will be prepared to go to the Planning Board for a permit next. Soldier On will also be placing a Veteran in the home at 1047 South Street. Steve mentioned that the paperwork for the Local Action Unit for this home has gone into DHCD, Nancy and Jay Kelley signed as the chairmen, Melissa worked on the marketing plan for DHCD. Vin asked how long it would take for approval. Steve said it goes to the lawyers for the Regulatory agreement so its difficult to put a timeframe on it. Vin said that it has been a long process and he is anxious to someone enjoy the home.

Anne Marie thanked the Chair for bringing all these items up for discussion. Nancy said that where we are all coming out of the covid pandemic, it's a good time to rethink next steps.

5. Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Fratalia made a motion to adjourn at 8:10 pm. Motion seconded by Mrs. Caplan. Motion unanimously approved based on roll call with Nancy Reed, Vincent Fratalia, Laura Caplan, James McMullen, Greg Peters and Melissa Maniscalco voting to approve.

Approved on: April 14, 2021