

## **Municipal Affordable Housing Trust**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, November 8, 2022**

1. **Approval of Meeting Minutes. Motion** by Kinhart to approve minutes of September 13, 2022. **Second** by Pfeffer. **Roll Call Vote** – Maxine – Yes, MaryAnn – Yes, Susan – Yes, Judith – Yes, Chris Feeley – Yes, Chris Vericker – Yes. **Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0**

2. **Franklin Ridge Update – Jonathan Juhl**

We received notification in late October, actually, Bryan did, that we received the Mass Works application that relates to Franklin Ridge and includes all the infrastructure work that's going to occur as part of that including the booster pumping station. The town got a Mass Works application a year ago and that is pretty unusual to get another one right behind it. The process is pretty competitive. I immediately contacted DHCD indicating that we received the Mass Works because that is one of the threshold conditions for moving the pre-application phase and being able to submit a One-Stop. Judith Pfeffer wanted to know why the Housing Trust was not informed that this was received. Bryan Taberner stated that the word hit the street before there was any formal notification and the reason for that is we received a letter that stated that the information was not to be released to the public until the governor released the information. Before the governor released the information people in town knew about it and it was being spread around. When we found out it was put on the next meeting agenda. We sometimes get notified like if this project gets a one-stop and gets awarded. The Town may know before even Jon but will be told to not say anything and it may go weeks before the governor's office sets up a press conference and actually makes an award announcement. It's nice to know ahead of time, but we are sworn to secrecy. Be prepared if we get DHCD's commitment, on a One-Stop, that will be the process. Last project Jon did they were notified in April but had to wait until July before it was formally released. Chris Vericker thought Housing Trust should be in the loop as we are part of the process. There have been other things moving forward also. The CPA provided funding to offset the economic development bill that was in the legislature. The legislature, in the summer, took up the economic housing bill in which there were Arpa funds that were being allocated but they never finished the actual vote so if they don't vote before the end of the session it basically goes back to square one. Just learned through NPR that the Legislature is going to pick up the bill when they reconvene. Those are the kind of things that happen all the time. We were hopeful that they were going to vote on the economic development bill but that did not happen. Jon has submitted a pre-application as required by DHCD to get in the One-Stop round. Kate Racer of DHCD thought it was great that the Town had done so much work on behalf of this project and it is really in a great position for the application. The process is very competitive with 90 applications going in the 2023 winter funding round which has the tax credits that we look for in addition to what the Town has provided. The greatest challenge is the FED. The FED is fighting inflation and as you know interest rates have over doubled plus since this time last year which makes the borrowing power for carrying a mortgage on

the property that much less. When I started doing the numbers a year ago I could borrow up to 7 million dollars now I'm down to about 5.2 million. Am working with Mass Housing Partnership on this. They are at a 6.75% and that was with cushion. We are talking about a couple years down the road before the permitting gets locked in. The same with construction financing as well. That is our challenge at this point. The key is to get in and do the One-Stop which Jon has been working on since last spring. The Town can move forward on the Mass Works grant as they are going to be doing the work with DPW and Sewer and Water in coordination with Bryan and Jon as well as Jamie and everyone in terms of when they actually put that out to bid and actually get that work done. Will have a coordination meeting so that we are all on the same page in relation to its impact on the Franklin Ridge project and our coordination of that. Arpa funds that are being used to increase the design plans to 75% for the Franklin Ridge Project as well as being able to get an independent cost estimate on what those costs are. It's a crazy world out there in the construction costs. Construction prices will have an impact on the real estate market which will slow down things and that will start to reduce or level off the construction costs that we have experienced. Lumber has come down, that is one of the big elements and others have not improved as quickly in terms of leveling off. So we will see how it all plays out. Our cost estimator is on top of that. Next step is to do the One-Stop and also continue to work with the Town in terms of developing the process for the Mass Works and also to continue to flush out the details with regards to the budget. Chris Vericker asked about the Arpa funds bringing the design to 75%. The housing choice grant was used by the Town and the CDM Smith (engineers selected) did the design of the booster pump station and the infrastructure related to that and that includes all the roadway that goes up to the Bright Hill subdivision. That work was completed in June and that was the basis for the submittal of the Mass Works application. That component is done. We've been working on the design component for the building itself. We've done a lot of work in regards to soils and geotechnical work. We've done a lot of work flushing out the design issues with DHCD. Now we are flushing out more information with mechanicals and electrical works and how it all comes together. This is preparation for the One-Stop submittal that will have a section that will show significant plans. Under that readiness to proceed process that we try to get to in regards to showing DHCD where we are at this particular point. In the meantime have had conversation with Kate Racer, Deputy Director on the private side of DHCD but she controls all the funding sources for projects like this. We are generating momentum here. Chris Vericker asked about CPA money and how things go forward with Legislature. 350 towns seeking their portion of the Arpa. The Town was looking for \$280,000 in Arpa funds. Very close to being approved back in August. But when negotiating with 350 towns and it just didn't get passed. New session starts in January. If successful in getting the One-stop that we submit in January. The State housing Agency has about three months to review applications which are about 90 apps that go in and about 25 get funded. There has been a real tough situation for the state because a lot of the projects, because of the costs, have been so high it's taken a lot of effort and creativity on the State to fill some of the projects in the pipeline and get those squared away in terms of allowing those to go on and close. So if you are successful in that it goes from DHCD with their recommendations of which projects get funded to the governor's office. We were getting notifications in July or August, and will take 4 months to make the formal announcements, then you get award letter and with award letter then if you have all the process going and it all works, then

you get to close. It's been taking about to the end of the year to get that closed and even into the following year. On schedule if we get this the end of 2023, we would be hopefully in the process of closing and then we would commence construction about 18 months for this building and then another 6 months to do all the final closeout and so we're 2 years behind in terms of completing this project. So from that perspective you are looking at 2025 or 2026.

- 3. Proposed 2023 Meeting Dates** - Chris Feeley wanted to know if we were to meet in July and August. Chris Vericker likes the schedule of every month where we can cancel meeting if we have to. Chris Feeley wanted to know if we had any intentions of going to in-person meeting. Judith Pfeffer asked if any meetings were in conflict with Holidays. Maxine Kinhart said no. Chris Vericker asked if the State requires open forums where there is a room where guests can attend and people can still attend via Zoom. Bryan Taberner stated that if you decide to go to in-person meetings, you still have to make Zoom available. Chris Feeley would like in-person. MaryAnn wants option to make it in-person but winter is coming. Judith Pfeffer likes Zoom for now and talk about it in the spring. **Motion** by Chris Feeley to approve the meeting dates. **Second** by Judith Pfeffer. Maxine – Yes, MaryAnn – Yes, Susan – Yes, Judith – Yes, Chris Feeley – Yes, Chris Vericker – Yes. **Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0**

**4. Social Services Links**

Chris Vericker asked if anyone had any comments. MaryAnn had comments about an elderly couple who were forced from their housing and it was difficult to find emergency housing. Wants to know if Housing Trust should become involved in some type of emergency housing? Assume Trust could pay for it. Maxine Kinhart wondered if the Housing Authority had emergency housing. Chris Feeley said that Housing Authority would give emergency situations priority but there is not emergency units available and would have to be in the course of regular business. Judith Pfeffer stated that it would be difficult for the Trust members to determine which cases would be worthy. Susan Younis asked when the need goes beyond the need for one unit. Chris Vericker wants to host a meeting of the players. Susan Younis agreed and suggested that making \$50,000 available at \$1,000 each might be a way to go. Chris Feeley said that CPA funds would not be allowed to give funds to an individual. Susan Younis stated that you would have to have a program and then someone to run it. Maxine Kinhart suggested making funds available to an entity like Saint Vincent De Paul. Susan Younis worried that funds would not be reserved for Franklin residents. Judith Pfeffer said there are a lot of people who need assistance. Chris Vericker stated that this topic needs more discussion.

**5. Future Agenda Items – None**

Respectfully Submitted,

Maxine Kinhart