

Present

Charles Bonenti, Kim Burnham, Van Ellet, Cheryl Shanks, Cathy Yamamoto (chair)

Absent: Bilal Ansari

Also present:

Joan Burns (resident)

Business

1. The minutes of the March 13 meeting were approved.
2. Affordable Housing Trust
 - A. The committee read through an updated draft document.
 - B. The committee made the following decisions, additional to those made at the previous meeting, approved in a 5-0-0 vote.
 1. The articles listing actions that need a 2/3 vote will be changed to require approval by 4 of 5 voting members.
 2. Reference to this will be added any place in which this might otherwise be ambiguous.
 - C. One question lingers for the select board/town counsel: does 6-3 B (2)--no more than 80 percent of trust assets may be borrowed against--mean that the board could not borrow, for example, more than \$160,000 if it had \$200,000 in assets, and would have to keep that \$200,000 in assets as long as it carried this debt?
 - D. These changes create the WAHT text that the selectmen will consider at their next (March 26) meeting.
3. Outreach and publicity
 - A. Program for April 3 public meeting at the Williams Inn co-hosted with Higher Ground, League of Women Voters, and the Housing Authority.
 1. Introduction by Carrie Bail, pastor, First Congregational Church
 2. Clip from WGBY showing devastation at The Spruces
 3. Presentation by Cathy Yamamoto
 - a. need before Irene noted in master plan
 - b. current need, waiting lists, and stock
 - c. value of creating WAHT: warrant articles
 4. Lauren Shuffleton slide presentation
 - a. what does AHT allow
 - b. AHT in Williamstown

5. Q&A with members of the AHC, planning board, Housing Authority, Higher Ground.

B. Information and flyers

1. Revised two-page FAQ sheet, 50 copies

2. Revised handout with numbers on what AH is available in Williamstown now, copied back-to-back with a revised handout on the housing section of the town's master plan from 2002, 50 copies

4. Questions from the public

Joan Burns expressed the concern that an AHT would have absolute power, be able to exercise eminent domain, and be antidemocratic. She advocated that any board of trustees comprise more than five members, who are listed by office, and who should not be restricted to town residents. The board accepted her written arguments, noted that town counsel alone could explain the legal implications of specific trust language, and urged her to attend the next Select Board meeting at which an AHT would be discussed.

5. New information and ideas

A. Pines Lodge has 61 lots, 45 of which are occupied, with two being renovated for sale.

B. Mass Development and the state Department of Housing and Community Development might have \$300,000 that could be used toward our first project.

C. Peter Fohlin thinks that the remaining remediation at PhoTech is not major.

D. Perhaps after in-town AH projects have been completed, the AHC could offer to trade an in-town property, for a town park, for a slice of distant conservation land, for AH development.

E. We would like to see construction emphasize environmental sustainability and energy conservation.

6. On our plate

A. Create or revise handouts for April 3 meeting

B. Discover where in Massachusetts law are the provisions pushing towns to transfer affordable housing development/implementation to a trust, community development corporation or LLC.

C. Assemble information into an accessible grid, listing the five prominent potential housing sites (PhoTech, privately owned land, Women's Exchange, Youth Center, Town Garage) and summarizing for each its main characteristics (ownership, purchase or demolition price, zoning, utilities and infrastructure, number of units)

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 3, 7:00 pm, Williams Inn

Meeting after that: Thursday, April 12, 7:00 pm, Town Hall