

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE PLYMOUTH AREA OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

**Board/Meeting:** Affordable Housing Trust (AHT)

**Date/Time/Place of Meeting:** Wednesday, March 20, 2024, 8am, Town Hall Cranberry Room & Zoom

**Board Members Attending:**

Kathleen Dunn, AHT Chair and LWV member  
Stephen Michael Palmer, Vice Chair  
Lee Hartmann, Planning Director  
Lisa Reilly, Plymouth Housing Authority  
Michael Sinclair, Banker  
Sandra Smith, Real Estate Agent  
Adrienne White, Real Estate Agent  
Christopher Knoth, Attorney (Zoom)  
Mark Snyder, Member at Large (Zoom)

**Other Attendees:**

Peggy Whalen, Community Development Director  
Michele Rowe, Community Development Program Coordinator  
Patrick Farah, Plymouth Conservation Commission and Community Development Office  
Art Desloges, P15 Town Meeting Member, LWV Board Member, and Guest Speaker  
Phoebe Flynn, LWV Affordable Housing Chair and LWV Observer Corps  
Lori Downs, Redbrook Resident and P17 Town Meeting Member (Zoom)  
Mari Ryan, Redbrook Resident and Community Representative (Zoom)  
Keith Graveline, Redbrook Resident (Zoom)  
Al DiNardo, P17/Redbrook Resident (Zoom)  
Walter Ohanion, Grantham Group Managing Director (Zoom)

**Agenda:** Available in person and online at  
<https://www.plymouth-ma.gov/577/Affordable-Housing-Trust>

**Prior Meeting Minutes:** Meeting Minutes from 2/21/24, presented and approved.

**Topics:**

- Financial Update on Inclusionary Payments and Accounts Paid: The AHT currently has a budget of \$231,406.82, which was presented and approved by the board.
- Public Comment
  - Lori Downs presented an updated position from the Redbrook Community on the Redbrook Affordable Housing Project. She said that residents are increasingly more positive about the plan and like how Grantham and A.D. Makepeace (ADM) are listening and responding to the residents. The

original resident survey implied they did not want the project, but they just didn't want it at the first location proposed. The residents like the new proposed location and tree buffer. In a recent survey, 108/116 residents supported affordable housing with over 30 indicating strong support of the project with ADM and the belief ADM will get to the promised goal of 103 affordable units. On behalf of the Redbrook Community, Lori asked that the AHT support this project with a commitment of \$500K, to help buy down deeper affordability for these units at 30% AMI.

- Al DiNardo, P17 (Redbrook), said the original outcry regarding the Redbrook Senior Affordable Housing Project was based on the proposed location, but now that the location was adjusted, everyone on Sunflower Way (the area most affected) is in favor of the project. There is still a small group of residents protesting, but their position is primarily based on internal squabbles with ADM, where they should instead be judging the project on its merits. Al said greater affordability and a project for ages 62+ are greatly needed for Plymouth residents, so the town should support it. Not offering to help fund this project would be like tearing up a coupon for 75% off affordable housing for 62 residents..
- Affordable Homes Act (H4138): Art Desloges provided a brief overview of the current MA Affordable Homes Act, a \$4.1B Bond Bill aimed to provide Massachusetts with approximately 40,000 more affordable units. H4138 includes a real estate transfer tax increase from 1% to 2.5% for home sales over \$1M to go to AHTs; an ADU provision that is slightly different from Plymouth's proposal (no parking requirement); 50% inclusionary for all towns with a 5-year production plan; and eviction ceiling adjustments. Art recently attended an 11-hour hearing at the State House along with hundreds of other community groups and representatives who were testifying, so he could advocate for Plymouth's needs to include Real Estate transfer taxes and a portion of the \$4.1B Bond to be provided as direct aid versus grant money to Plymouth in order to save money and time. Art attended as a Town Meeting member, but mentioned he would have had more leverage as a State Representative. Kathy Dunn added that some towns attended with entire coalitions, so as a town, we should work to create a coalition for future efforts like this since there are many issues being voted on at the state level, and citizens cannot guarantee their legislative representatives are always in favor of these ideas.
- Redbrook Senior Affordable Housing Project (Cranberry Commons):
  - Lee Hartmann supports the project proposal, citing the need not only for affordable housing, but the project's ability to buy down deeper affordability, which the town should support through partnerships like this.
  - Michael Sinclair supports the project proposal, saying it addresses a real need for affordable housing for seniors, and would be an asset for the community.
  - Adrienne White is in favor of the project proposal and asked about the waitlist for seniors. Lee said the list through the housing authority is typically 3-6 years.

- Mark Snyder abstained from comments since he has a professional conflict.
- Lisa Reilly works with the board of housing authority as well and is a prime supporter of this proposal because the town needs affordable senior units.
- Christopher Knoth is generally in favor of efforts like this and saw his parents have difficulty finding adequate housing after an NYPD retirement, so he supports this project due to the great need for senior affordable housing overall and here in Plymouth.
- Kathy Dunn reported that P4 received some negative feedback about the project at a recent caucus meeting and offered pros and cons to the project. Pros include the fact that it is deeply discounted and adds 62 units to the town's affordable housing inventory. Concerns include that this project is only for senior housing and consolidates seniors all in one location, when the town also needs family housing and the AHT prefers neighborhoods to be a mix of family and senior housing. The biggest concern, however, is that the current AHT budget cannot support the project's request for \$500,000. Kathy recommended the AHT support the project on it's merits, and see how the town votes before deciding the amount of money to promise.
- Stephen Michael Palmer supports the proposal and Kathy's plan, recommending that they consider a figure like \$100K if the proposal passes at Spring Town Meeting.
- Habitat for Humanity Day of Service: Lisa proposed a date of Friday, 4/19 for the AHT to assist with the current Habitat project in Plymouth and will reach out to Habitat to confirm.
- Old/New Business
  - Town Meeting Articles: There are four Articles for Spring Town Meeting that impact Affordable Housing. Members of the AHT and other experts are maximizing their attendance to precinct caucuses leading up to Spring Town Meeting to help educate citizens and representatives.
    - Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
    - Coalition to End Homelessness Proposal
    - Article 10: Transfer of 3 x Tax Title Parcels to the AHT
    - Redbrook Senior Affordable Housing Project (Cranberry Commons)
  - Housing Production Plan (HPP): Lee Hartmann briefed that Plymouth's latest HPP has been approved by the state.

**Handouts:**

- Agenda for 3/20/24
- AHT Financial Summary as of 3/20/24

**Observer:** Phoebe Flynn, LWV Observer Corps

When the official town minutes from this meeting have been approved, they will be available on the Town of Plymouth website at <https://www.plymouth-ma.gov/agendacenter>