

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE PLYMOUTH AREA OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

Board/Meeting: Affordable Housing Trust (AHT)

Date/Time/Place of Meeting: Wednesday, June 26, 2024, 8am, Town Hall Cranberry Room & Zoom

Board Members:

Kathleen Dunn, AHT Chair and LWV member (present)
Stephen Michael Palmer, Vice Chair (present)
Lee Hartmann, Planning Director (present)
Lisa Reilly, Plymouth Housing Authority (present)
Michael Sinclair, Banker (present)
Sandra Smith, Real Estate Agent (present)
Adrienne White, Real Estate Agent (present)
Christopher Knoth, Attorney (present)
Mark Snyder, Member at Large (not present)

Staff:

Peggy Whalen, Community Development Director (not present)
Michele Rowe, Community Development Program Coordinator (present)
Lauren Lind, Deputy Director of Planning and Development (present)

Other Attendees:

Phoebe Flynn, LWV Affordable Housing Chair and LWV Observer Corps
Steve Bolotin, Planning Board Chair

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

Topics:

- Open Meeting: 8:00am
- Approval of Meeting Minutes from May 15, 2024: Approved
- Public Comment: None
- Financial Update: delayed to next meeting when Peggy Whalen is present.
- Land Bank Presentation: Steve Bolotin, Planning Board, Chair
 - The purpose of the Land Bank is to create a means to help fund the purchase of land and support projects by both public and private entities intended to meet these needs without putting a further burden on the Plymouth taxpayer.
 - The principal means of funding will be a 2% land transfer fee paid by the buyer of any property in Plymouth. This will be subject to a series of exemptions including:

- House costing under a certain amount determined by the Land Bank Commission
 - Affordable Housing
 - Charitable/Nonprofit Organizations
 - First-time homebuyers
 - Plymouth residents selling a residence to buy another in Plymouth
 - Plymouth Affordable Housing Trust
- Decisions will be made by a Land Bank Commission subject to the requirements of the legislation allowing the creation of the Land Bank and the rules and regulations set up by that Commission. Members of the Commission will be appointed as follows, but will not be members of these board and committees:
 - Select Board: 2 appointees
 - Town Meeting through the COPC: 2 appointees
 - Planning Board: 2 appointees
 - Affordable Housing Trust: 1 appointee
 - Open Space Committee: 1 appointee
 - Land Use and Acquisition Committee: 1 appointee
- AHT Reorganization: members have until June 30th to get sworn in as AHT committee members for their upcoming terms.
- Land Acknowledgement*: Kathy Dunn introduced the acknowledgment, but said the one on the agenda was from the Conservation Commission, versus the one she had requested. Phoebe Flynn was asked to provide background on the updates to the land acknowledgement, which she said is a more contemporary and inclusive acknowledgment.
 - Lee Hartmann said Town Counsel and Town Manager are reviewing due to concerns about a land acknowledgement opening the town up to litigation or having to acknowledge a number of other groups, which could lead to a whole range of people asking for similar statements to be made, possibly ending up with 10 pages of acknowledgments. Lee also said he didn't see how the land acknowledgement had anything to do with their AHT agenda. Lee said when he was acting town manager, there was a request to fly the pride flag, at which time he warned town counsel that Plymouth could fly the pride flag, but would then have to acknowledge every group out there (Pride Boys and Christian Coalition as examples), so the request was denied. Lee said in abstract it's a great idea, but it could open up "Pandora's box."
 - Mike Sinclair said he didn't understand why the request is part of the AHT meeting. If the town wants to acknowledge it, that's fine, but what does it have to do with affordable housing? Mike said he didn't think the AHT should be discussing this matter.
 - Kathy Dunn said she sees it as a way to respect our indigenous ancestors and acknowledge what is important to us, stating that many other towns and organizations do this, but said the topic could be tabled until Town Counsel comes back with a determination.

- Master Plan Meeting Report: good turnout from the town; will discuss more next meeting.
- Old/New Business
 - Habitat for Humanity House on Wareham Road – great success
 - Use of our tax title properties, especially the one on Wareham Road – discuss at the next meeting.
- Adjourned: 9:07am

Handouts:

- Agenda for 6/26/24
- AHT Financial Summary as of 6/26/24

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>

*The observer for this meeting was asked to speak on this topic, and provided a factual overview of the current land acknowledgement being presented by the League of Women Voters to different Town of Plymouth Boards and Committees.