

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE PLYMOUTH AREA OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

Board/Meeting: Affordable Housing Trust (AHT)

Date/Time/Place of Meeting: Wednesday, October 16, 2024, 8am, Town Hall Cranberry Room & Zoom

Board Members:

Kathleen Dunn, AHT Chair and LWV member (present)
Stephen Michael Palmer, Vice Chair (not present)
Lee Hartmann, Planning Director (present)
Mark Snyder, Certified Public Accountant (present - virtual)
Michael Sinclair, Banker (present)
Christopher Knoth, Attorney (not present)
Sandra Smith, Realtor (present)
Adrienne White, Real Estate Broker (present)
Russell Shirley, Plymouth Housing Authority Chair (not present)

Staff:

Peggy Whalen, Community Development Director (present)
Michele Rowe, Community Development Program Coordinator (present)

Other Attendees:

Lauren Lind, Deputy Director of Planning and Development
Keith Graveline, Redbrook Resident (virtual)

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

Topics:

- Financial Update: Current balance is \$379,908.97 (approved)
- Master Plan Meeting Report from Lauren Lind, Deputy Director of Planning and Development
 - Fall Workshop Series @ Plymouth South Middle School
 - All events open to the public
 - Soliciting community feedback
 - Email listserv and inbox
 - Upcoming traveling and listening series in each neighborhood, beginning on 11/30/24 at The Pinehills
 - Final large scale workshop (TBD - Spring 2025)
- Development of Tax Title Properties
 - Wareham Road

- Kathy Dunn briefed that Kat Miller (Mass Housing) is looking to support larger projects, and 195 Wareham would only have about 1.5 acres of buildable land
 - Habitat for Humanity is meeting to look at property on 10/21/24
 - Power line research shows less need for concern
 - Plan to request utility assistance from Redbrook
 - Strand Ave
 - Lee Hartman is working to complete the land transfer
 - CPC Funds - Kathy met with Chair, Ed Bradley, on 10/10/24. He is very interested in working more closely with the AHT, like he's seen other towns do. CPC has also hired a housing consultant, Lynn Sweet, to look at development projects, application proposals, and other housing initiatives.
 - New potential concern for tax title properties: In assessing Strand Ave, Town Counsel has come back saying if we try to transfer any tax title properties to Habitat, even if the land has cleared tax title, there is a small risk that the heirs could come back asking the town for the difference in cost between the property value and what they owed in taxes. This could affect all tax title properties, which require resources and expenditures to clear and assess as well.
 - Lee plans to do a full assessment of exposure and inform the Select Board.
- Pilgrim Pride - Condos/Apartments across from Mayflower General Store
 - Investor owns 13 units (1-2BR) at market value
 - Would like to make them deed restricted affordable housing
 - Working the process of converting market value units to deed restricted
 - Lee Hartmann said they should look at trying to work the 25% solution for projects like this, which would give affordable housing credit for 100% of the units in the complex/development
 - Mike Sinclair said it might be helpful to approach other owners to see if they can increase affordable housing inventory with this approach
 - Owners who take this approach and make their units affordable can benefit from state/town rehab funding to improve their buildings, which otherwise might not be financially feasible.
- Affordable housing articles before Town Meeting on October 19, 2024
 - The potential development of 24 units on Brayley Lane was halted due to a Planning Board vote.
 - The project on 134 Court Street is a Rick Vayo project for 10 affordable units, 6 of which have already been built.
 - Article 16: Zoning bylaw for waterfront zone to allow two units per acre for an area in North Plymouth between Hedges Rd and Atlantic St with 40% of the land going toward open space. *(Passed 126-8-2)*
 - Article 17: Land Bank is a controversial topic that Steve Bolotin previously presented to the AHT. If it passes at Town Meeting, it will go to the State Legislature, and Lee said it is unlikely to pass at state. If it does pass at state, it will come back to voters, which would be a long way off. *(Passed*

72-71 with the tie-breaking vote cast by the moderator and after the Article was amended to include “Decisions to acquire interests in land and to request state approval of any proposed dispositions of any parcel of land or of any change in its use shall require the affirmative vote of six of the nine commissioners.”)

- Update on Town Housing Initiatives: Lee Hartmann
 - Benny’s Plaza: property owners committed to working with the town on something mutually acceptable
 - Claremont: originally approved by the Planning board for a 55 and older development, but was appealed successfully by a neighbor. Now it will probably become a 300-unit 40B, which should have a proposal before the Select Board soon with the developer’s proposal, to include additional things they are willing to do for the town, such as a booster pump to solve some water issues in West Plymouth.
 - Pulte: Four projects in the vicinity of Hedge Road, proposing 150 units of condos for homeownership plus maintenance of the warehouse and lot used for the 4h of July parade.
 - Bert’s: No real movement. Owner's first step would be to go to the Select Board to use the lot for parking, which they haven’t done yet.
- CPC Meetings: Kathy would like a member of the AHT to attend CPC meetings on a rotating basis to stay informed on CPC projects and discussions. She will send out the schedule for everyone to provide availability. Kathy also sent a document prior to the meeting to everyone about how CPCs operate at the state and local level, which she recommends reading.
- Adrienne White has been doing some research on Mass Housing Partnerships (MHP), which supports communities, housing authorities and nonprofits during the early stages of affordable housing development. Their website is <https://www.mhp.net/>

Handouts:

- Agenda for 10/16/24
- AHT Financial Summary as of 10/16/24
- Master Plan Handouts

Observer: Phoebe Flynn, LWV Observer Corps

*The observer for this meeting was not available to attend the meeting in person on 10/16/24, so watched a recording of the meeting.

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>