Affordable Housing Trust
May 2, 2019, 7:30 PM
DPW Training Room
Minutes

Present: Michael Marcucci, Jim Brand, Ann Thompson, Todd Trehubenko, Jack Wolfe, Tim Bonfatti, Sarah Raposa
Absent: Adam Ameden, Marion Bonoldi
Others: Suzanne Siino, Steve Merritt, Mike Ripp

Acting Chairman James Brand called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM and stated it was being recorded.

Minutes –
At approximately 7:32 pm, Mr. Jack Wolfe made a motion to approve the minutes with from April 4, 2019. Seconded by Ms. Ann Thompson. The Vote: 4-0.

Mr. Trehubenko made motion to approve the minutes with corrected edits from March 7, 2019. Seconded by Ms. Thompson. The Vote: 4-0.

Mr. Brand made a motion to approve the minutes from February 7, 2019. Seconded by Trehubenko. The Vote: 5-0.

Mr. Wolfe said he wanted to say thank you to Ms. Raposa, Mr. Brand and Mr. Marcucci for putting together the package for the Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Wolfe said it was a good team effort and well-done. Ms. Thompson agrees.

Brief Committee Project Updates
Rosebay/Tilden Village, Pound Street (Trehubenko) - Mr. Trehubenko said there was a meeting regarding the design prior to the AHT meeting. Mr. Trehubenko said the housing authority, developer, Mr. Brand, Ms. Raposa and Mr. Greg Sullivan, Planning Board were in attendance. Mr. Trehubenko said the developer presented the updated set of plans that were designed to address comments given at a previous meeting. Mr. Trehubenko said that he felt the group thought the changes, generally speaking, were working to address the group's previous recommendations. Mr. Trehubenko said the next step is the Zoning Board of Appeals. Ms. Raposa said the developer seems to want to move as fast as possible. Ms. Raposa said as soon as the developer makes application to the town, then the ZBA has 30 days to open the public hearing and then 6 months to render a decision. Ms. Raposa said the decision can then be filed up to 40 days after the decision. Ms. Raposa said the process has a prescribed timeline. Ms. Thompson asked if the AHT should be present at the ZBA hearing. Mr. Trehubenko said it is a good idea to have the AHT represented. Ms. Raposa said the comments from the Boards and department heads will be very important with this application due to the strongly worded Municipal Comment Letter which essential said the design needs to be addressed or the BOS would perhaps make a recommendation to evoke safe harbor. Ms. Raposa felt the subcommittee meeting was very
productive. Ms. Thompson asked what the biggest negatives are regarding the project. Ms. Raposa said the size, bulk, and the height. Mr. Brand said the developer has worked on the height a bit and had it down to within 5 feet of the allowable measurement.

Mr. Trehubenko said most townspeople are used to the location being a patch of green space and the proposed change is an overwhelming idea. Mr. Trehubenko said townspeople will be expressing concerns about traffic, development, and general impact. Mr. Wolfe asked that given the fact that it took so long for this to come to gestation and now there is a big push for it, what is causing the big push. Mr. Trehubenko said he believes there has been a lot of money and time put into getting the project to this point. Ms. Raposa feels the legal agreement took a long time to finalize. Mr. Trehubenko agrees the ground lease agreement took much longer than intended. Ms. Thompson asked if it is believed the main objections will come from abutters. Mr. Brand and Ms. Raposa said yes.

American Legion, Peter Kristof Way (Brand) – Ms. Raposa said the BOS signed the LIP application and the MOU. Mr. Raposa said the developer can now submit to DHCD.

New Business
Suzanne Siino, Group Home Discussion

Mr. Tim Bonfatti said, as the AHT knows, Lifeworks has moved in a different direction to a property in Westwood. Mr. Michael Marcucci noted that he had been informed that the Lifeworks agreement in Westwood had fallen through. Ms. Suzanne Siino reported she was informed the Lifeworks agreement in Westwood was moving forward.

Ms. Siino thanked the AHT for continuing the conversation about group homes for people with disabilities and noted that it is part of the Housing Production Plan. Ms. Siino said the problem is that DDS is running out of money to fund development and care of these homes; DDS is getting out of the business of developing these types of homes. Ms. Siino said parents of disabled children are realizing the strategy of developing a home needs to change.

Ms. Siino said privately developing a home is becoming a more viable option. Ms. Siino said there are so many different ways a home could be developed privately. Ms. Siino introduced Steve Merritt, Norwood Housing Authority, and said Mr. Merritt has been a great resource. Ms. Siino said a developer has developed 3 homes in Norwood, each with 9 beds for disable residents. Ms. Siino said one of the homes counted for SHI (the two other homes do not count towards SHI due to how it was developed).

Ms. Siino said another potential option for housing is working with the housing authority and some people who don’t need full time care, could be placed through the housing authority.

Ms. Siino said that since Tilden Village was developed with State money; they are required to have 13.5% non-elderly, disabled and since the expansion of Tilden Village (Rosebay) is
being developed privately; there are no non-elderly, disabled requirements. Ms. Siino said it would be the housing authority that would get the ball rolling with the State for the Section 8 vouchers and then manage them.

Ms. Siino said she would have liked to have had the conservation about different options regarding Rosebay for disabled residents. Mr. Marcucci said building a group home is a priority for the AHT but the AHT will not run the home and cannot pay for the care.

Ms. Siino suggested hiring a housing specialist and has names that could be recommended. Mr. Merritt mentioned that “Best Buddies” just come out with an inclusion model that could be used for guidance. Ms. Siino said the goal is to have a place that disable citizens can call “home” by the time they are 30 years old and it would be great if they could stay in their home town. Ms. Siino feels there are 10 – 15 families that feel the same way. Ms. Siino feels a housing specialist could also help at the Medfield State Hospital site with group homes. Mr. Merritt said the housing specialist would work with the housing production plan regarding affordability and disabilities and expand upon it. The specialist would find out what opportunities are available, what other cities and towns have used as models to achieve goals, and make the goals a bit less ambiguous.

Mr. Marcucci said what is needed is someone who runs these homes, knows how they are developed and managed to come to the AHT and say they want to buy this piece of land and how will you work with us to obtain it. Ms. Siino and Mr. Merritt said there are no companies like that out there. Ms. Raposa feels the AHT’s intention is to contribute to the group home proposal but not be the driver of it.

Mr. Merritt said the focus should not just be land. Mr. Merritt asked if any areas could be rezoned to accommodate a group home; are there any older homes that could work as a group home. Mr. Merritt said a lot of times there is a hidden gem. Mr. Marcucci said Lifeworks has looked at the housing inventory.

Mr. Marcucci said again, one way or another; it will have to be the AHT working with another agency. Mr. Marcucci said he feels Ms. Siino needs the consultant to figure out the organization that will lead the group home. Mr. Marcucci said because the inventory and options for land in Medfield are so small, a consultant wouldn’t be needed. Mr. Marcucci said the AHT works without the Medfield State Hospital site as an option, at this time. Mr. Marcucci is sure a group home will be implemented at the Medfield State Hospital site unfortunately, the timing of the development is uncertain.

Mr. Merritt asked if the Rosebay property is still an option. Mr. Merritt asked who give final approval on the project at Rosebay. Ms. Raposa said there is local approval and state approval for funding. Mr. Merritt said since the disabilities housing is not a state requirement for this project, could the town make it a requirement. Mr. Marcucci said that Rosebay already has a contract. Ms. Siino said when all of this private development allowed the state required percentages are lost. Mr. Marcucci said it would be worth
meeting with Mr. Brian McMillin, developer of Rosebay, to see if the disable citizens could be included into Rosebay.

Mr. Marcucci said he would like to see examples of other AHT, from other towns and the housing specialist the AHT used. Mr. Marcucci said it would be helpful to see what other towns have done; with what Ms. Siino is proposing. Mr. Bonfatti suggested that Ms. Siino put something in writing as a proposal that the AHT can analyze and ask questions.

Mr. Wolfe said the discussion tonight has been solutions and he is unclear of the demand. Mr. Wolfe asked how many residents are moderately disabled, how many are severely disabled, how many come from families of means, and how many come from families in need. Mr. Wolfe said before the problem gets solved, he would like to understand the need. Mr. Wolfe suggests Ms. Siino puts that information in the proposal. Mr. Wolfe said he agrees that a conversation with the Rosebay developer and the housing authority is necessary for two reasons; (1) why the present Tilden Village isn’t in compliance, (2) could the developer include disable citizen in the Rosebay project. Mr. Wolfe said the good news and bad news is that there is a large wealthy portion of population in Medfield. Mr. Wolfe said some residents might be able to help with funding. Mr. Wolfe asked if there is a 40B type project that has a component for disable housing and a portion of which is allocated to low income families. Mr. Wolfe asked Ms. Siino to look into this.

Ms. Siino thanked the AHT for their time.

At approximately 8:50 pm, Mr. Bonfatti made motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Wolfe. The Vote: 6-0.