



TOWN OF MEDFIELD

Office of the

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

MEETING OF:
April 3, 2025
MINUTES

Members Present: Newton Thompson, Brent Nelson, Eileen Murphy, Eric Lavin, Michael Marcucci

Members Absent: Joe Hunt, Kerry McCormack

Staff Present: Maria De La Fuente, Director of Land Use; Cara Wise

Location: ZOOM

Affordable Housing Chair Michael Marcucci opened the meeting at approximately 7:30 PM and performed a roll call for attendance.

- ✓ Newton Thompson, Member
- ✓ Mr. Brent Nelson, Member
- ✓ Eric Lavin, Member
- ✓ Eileen Murphy, Member
- ✓ Michael Marcucci - Chair

Mr. Marcucci suggested proceeding with updates to allow time to obtain and review the minutes. He recognized Ms. De La Fuente to present staff updates.

Committee Project Updates

1. Habitat for Humanity

Ms. De La Fuente stated that earlier in the week she had received a site plan for the proposed Habitat for Humanity home. She reported that a direct abutter had visited her office within the past month to follow up on process steps, and that she had prepared an email chain to notify abutters about next steps. She explained that the abutters remained unhappy with the proposal and expressed serious concerns about the implications of building a home at the location. She described the site plan as largely compliant with zoning, with the exception of insufficient frontage to render the lot buildable as-of-right. She advised that the applicant would therefore need either a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals or to pursue a Comprehensive Permit (Chapter 40B).

Ms. De La Fuente reported that she had recommended the 40B route—specifically a Local Initiative Program (LIP) project—because it would streamline addition to the Subsidized

Housing Inventory, and she believed that remained the applicant's preferred path. She emphasized that her review to date had been limited to the site plan and that no supplemental environmental or flood analysis materials had been submitted. She stated that the next step would be placement on a Select Board agenda and that, after speaking with Ms. Franklin, she was targeting May 20 for that discussion—after the Annual Town Meeting. She said she would follow up with Habitat for Humanity to determine their availability for May 20, and, if confirmed, would notify all abutters to attend. She anticipated that the Select Board's discussion would be decisive as to whether the proposal would move forward, with subsequent technical analyses to follow if the Select Board supported a land disposition.

Mr. Marcucci asked for discussion. Mr. Thompson inquired whether the Trust would need to formally opine on the proposal when making a recommendation to the Select Board. Ms. De La Fuente stated that the Trust could either hold a joint session with the Select Board or convene a separate Trust meeting beforehand to review the site plan in more detail; she deferred to the Chair. Mr. Marcucci asked whether the project was being proposed as a LIP; Ms. De La Fuente confirmed that it was, explaining that the Town's contribution would be the conveyance of Town-owned land. Mr. Marcucci noted that because the parcel was Town-owned, the matter properly started with the Select Board regarding a potential land disposition. He recalled typical LIP procedures in which the Trust would hold an initial hearing and make a recommendation to the Select Board, but stated that given the land sale component and the modest scope (a single home), it could be appropriate to begin with the Select Board and have the Trust participate, potentially as part of a joint meeting, to minimize duplicative steps. Ms. De La Fuente asked whether she should coordinate with Ms. Franklin to post a joint agenda and to sequence the items so the joint portion could adjourn first. Mr. Marcucci directed her to ask the Select Board Chair how the Board wished to proceed and to take direction from the Chair on format and timing, emphasizing there was time to coordinate appropriately. Ms. De La Fuente agreed to follow up by email.

Ms. Murphy asked about timing and referenced a Select Board meeting on April 29 to address Trinity matters, clarifying that the agenda for that date was not heavy. Mr. Marcucci recalled that Ms. De La Fuente had mentioned May 20. Ms. Murphy acknowledged the date and expressed no further concern. Ms. De La Fuente reiterated that Ms. Franklin and Ms. Trierweiler had asked staff to schedule this item after Town Meeting, which aligned with the proposed May 20 date. She added that, should the Select Board support moving forward, a Town Meeting article could be required in a future year, but for now, May 20 would be the next discussion point. Mr. Marcucci concurred that the Trust need not focus on Town Meeting at this stage and transitioned to the next topic by noting that the Zoning Board hearing for 86 Plain Street had begun the prior evening.

2. 86 Plain St

Ms. De La Fuente reported that the Zoning Board hearing for 86 Plain Street went well and lasted approximately three and a half hours. She stated that the first session focused on traffic, beginning with the developer's project overview, followed by participation from the Town's peer traffic engineers. She noted an attendance of roughly 60 abutters and neighbors, resulting in a full room. She summarized principal concerns raised: the condition and width of Plain Street relative to state standards; insufficient sight distances associated with the proposed split

driveway (separate ingress and egress), including one curb cut located less than 60 feet from an intersection where the Town prefers 225 feet of separation; pronounced roadway curvature and elevation changes contributing to limited sight lines; and the potential need to remove numerous trees either within the right-of-way or on neighboring properties, to be determined. She stated that the peer traffic engineers had recommended revising the driveway configuration to a single consolidated access to lengthen sight distance and improve safety. She reported that the applicant agreed to consider relocating the driveway and to return with a revised layout and updated safety calculations. She further explained that the applicant's prior sight-distance calculations had been based on the posted speed limit of 30 miles per hour, whereas the observed 85th-percentile speed was 35 miles per hour, requiring recalculation using the higher speed. She observed that estimated trip generation for the development was approximately 226 daily trips (counting each in-and-out movement separately), and recounted abutter testimony that winter conditions effectively render the roadway one-way in places and that proximity to the Community Gardens further constrains operations for nine months of the year.

Ms. De La Fuente stated that the applicant would explore safety improvements but cautioned that roadway geometry, utilities, and environmental constraints limited options. She outlined the challenges of widening Plain Street, citing utility poles, tree removal along a designated scenic way, existing stone walls, and wetlands along portions of both sides of the road, as referenced by abutters. She noted that while a developer contribution toward roadway improvements was possible—as had occurred with the Dale Street 40B—there was no assurance of such funding. She reported receiving approximately 20 letters of opposition and petitions totaling more than 200 signatures, reflecting substantial community engagement at the hearing. She directed interested Trust members to Medfield TV's YouTube channel (Live tab) for an excellent-quality recording and mentioned that she had taken more than 25 pages of notes to support comprehensive minutes. She announced a site visit scheduled for Thursday, April 10, at 9:00 AM for board and commission members only, at the applicant's request for liability reasons, with no substantive discussion permitted. She offered to post an agenda if the Trust wished to join the site visit and stated that the next public hearing date would be April 28, potentially via Zoom, with subsequent sessions likely in person to facilitate discussion. She explained that the April 28 session would continue the traffic theme (part two) and begin stormwater review, and that staff was organizing “theme” hearings to use consultant resources efficiently.

Mr. Thompson asked whether the 86 Plain Street proposal was a 40B. Ms. De La Fuente confirmed that it was a 24-unit condominium development with six affordable units, further stating that the affordable three-bedroom units were projected at approximately \$330,000 and the affordable four-bedroom units at approximately \$360,000, while market-rate units were projected at approximately \$1.4 million for three-bedrooms and \$1.6 million for four-bedrooms. Mr. Thompson confirmed the April 10 site visit timing; Ms. De La Fuente reiterated the 9:00 AM start and a 60–90 minute duration and stated she would also ask whether members of the Conservation Commission wished to post and attend. She noted that the applicant intended to wait until zoning approval was substantially assured before filing with the Conservation Commission, acknowledging the risk that a later Conservation Commission action could necessitate design changes requiring a return to the Zoning Board for a permit modification. She stated that the Walpole Conservation Commission had written to indicate it had not been notified of the earlier ANRAD filing in Medfield, wished to be notified as a direct abutter, and sought delineation review on its side because most of the site drains to a Walpole pond. She noted that

Walpole requested that any work within the buffer to Walpole wetlands trigger an NOI filing with Walpole. She summarized environmental issues raised: roadway work within Medfield's no-disturb buffer; conversion of an existing gravel driveway into a roadway; the presence of a vernal pool; and proposed construction as close as 30 feet to wetlands despite Medfield's locally enforced 50-foot no-disturb standard. She explained that under a Comprehensive Permit the Zoning Board assumes jurisdiction over local permits—including scenic road bylaws, local wetlands bylaw provisions, and local septic regulations—while state-level regulations (Title 5 jurisdiction of the Board of Health and NOI jurisdiction of Conservation Commissions under the Wetlands Protection Act) remain in effect and cannot be waived. She stated that the Zoning Board might need to retain an independent environmental peer reviewer or wetland scientist, and that staff intended to coordinate closely with the Conservation Commission and invite members to Zoning Board sessions. She added that the project proposed a shared wastewater treatment (large septic) system and that Plain Street lacked public sewer. Ms. Murphy compared the planned April 10 site walk to a prior Select Board walk; Ms. De La Fuente confirmed it would be similar and strictly observational, focused on orienting officials to driveway location, the vernal pool, sight-distance vantage points, and potential cut locations along the roadway.

Meeting Minute Approval

Mr. Marcucci invited comments or corrections on the October minutes. Ms. Murphy stated that she found them very thorough. Mr. Thompson stated that they were well written. Mr. Lavin offered a minor cleanup, explaining that in Item 7 the italicized header should read “Public comments regarding 86 Plain Street” rather than referencing Habitat for Humanity.

Motion: Ms. Murphy made a motion to approve the minutes of October 17 as corrected.

Second: Mr. Thompson seconded the motion.

- ✓ Roll Call: Mr. Nelson – aye, Mr. Lavin – aye, Mr. Thompson – aye, Ms. Murphy – aye, Mr. Marcucci – aye (5-0)

3. Update on the Medfield State Hospital Project

Mr. Marcucci asked whether there was any other business. Ms. Murphy offered an update on the Trinity Medfield State Hospital project. She stated that since the Trust's last meeting, the Select Board and Trinity had conducted a site walk to finalize the back boundary near the North Field to avoid “pinching” that could impair future access to Town-owned land for potential long-term uses. She referenced a prior situation off Harding Street (Hinkley parcel) where the Town now must use an easement to access land it had purchased, and said the current layout had been adjusted to avoid repeating that scenario. She noted that the Select Board had reviewed the matter again earlier in the week and was confident that access to the back land was secured.

Ms. Murphy also described discussion with neighbors regarding the proposed parking lot near the water tower and reported that Trinity's engineers shifted the lot approximately 300 feet farther from the abutting cul-de-sac, lengthening and narrowing it while maintaining the same number of spaces. She stated that a berm would be constructed to provide additional elevation, and with fencing and trees the visual buffer would be significant such that residents on the cul-de-sac would not have views into the lot. She characterized the field session as productive

and stated that the Board's approvals at its Tuesday meeting were timed to allow Trinity to proceed to the Planning Board for required reviews.

Ms. De La Fuente added that Trinity would file with the Planning Board by Friday and that the Planning Board would open the definitive subdivision hearing on May 12. Ms. Murphy and Mr. Thompson briefly discussed overall project health; Ms. Murphy said the project was moving in the right direction, while acknowledging ongoing funding milestones, and expressed confidence that the Select Board and Trinity were aligned on current steps after walking the staked layout with the on-site lead, Dan Moore.

4. Medfield Housing Authority

Ms. Murphy provided a brief status note on the Medfield Housing Authority effort, saying there was effectively no update. She asked whether the applicant had appeared before the Zoning Board. Ms. De La Fuente replied that the Housing Authority's traffic engineers had contacted her for information on nearby developments, but she had not received state approval notices or feedback letters; to her knowledge, the state decision remained pending.

Upcoming Meetings

Mr. Marcucci stated that the next regular Trust meeting would be on June 5, with the caveat that a special joint meeting with the Select Board regarding the Habitat proposal might occur on May 20. He asked for a motion to adjourn.

Adjournment

Motion: Ms. Murphy made a motion to adjourn.

Second: Mr. Thompson seconded the motion.

Roll call:

- Roll Call: Mr. Nelson – aye, Mr. Lavin – aye, Mr. Thompson – aye, Ms. Murphy – aye, Mr. Marcucci – aye (5-0)

Mr. Marcucci declared the meeting adjourned and thanked all participants.

Respectfully submitted,
Maria De La Fuente, Director of Land Use