



TOWN OF MEDFIELD

Office of the

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

MEETING OF:
August 28, 2025
MINUTES

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

Members Absent: Joe Hunt, Kerry McCormack, Newton Thompson, Member

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

Location: ZOOM

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

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

Committee Project Updates

1. Medfield State Hospital

Ms. De La Fuente reported that the Planning Board had approved the certificate of approval for the subdivision of the Medfield State Hospital on Monday, had endorsed it on Tuesday evening, and that it had been recorded on Wednesday. She explained that the Town was now awaiting the final plan set; the applicant had six months to present that plan set to the Planning Board, after which Planning Board approval for that component would be complete. She stated that the project would then move forward into pre-engineering work and subsequently to construction, adding that she did not yet have an estimated date to break ground but that the Planning Board process had been “pretty smooth sailing” for Trinity.

Ms. Murphy raised a point of clarification received from a resident. She stated that the filing with the Planning Board had listed “11 individual residences” and asked Ms. De La Fuente to confirm whether each building was considered an individual residential lot rather than a single large campus. Ms. De La Fuente clarified that the application had been filed as 11 residential lots because an apartment-type use is a residential use. She observed that some members of the public had misunderstood “residential” to mean “single-family residential,” whereas the project remained the multi-family rehabilitation that had been previously presented. Ms. Murphy noted that the public misconception was one of communication and added that some residents had

expressed concern that the property could have been sold for more if it were single-family, which was not the case. Ms. De La Fuente stated that, in her notice to abutters, she had included additional language to clarify that the project was unchanged and that the phrasing in the filing had simply been different. Ms. Murphy thanked her for the clarification.

2. Rosebay 40B

Ms. De La Fuente proceeded to provide a brief update on the Rose Bay project. She explained that Town staff had met with Rosebay's attorney and representative to organize prerequisites ahead of a Zoning Board submission. She said the development team would seek a Housing Authority vote to submit a joint application related to the existing Tilden Village Comprehensive Permit from the 1970s, which currently covers seven lots comprising the Housing Authority parcels. She outlined that the proposal was to amend the Tilden Village Comprehensive Permit to limit it to the portion of land on which Tilden Village is actually built, thereby freeing the remaining lots for the Rosebay development. She added that a brand new comprehensive permit would then be filed for Rosebay, as that project would be operated for the next ninety-nine years by a different company; in her view, creating a separate permit would be the cleanest approach. She anticipated that the application could be seen soon, noting that the attorney required time to prepare documents for the joint application, and expressed hope to open a hearing in November or December, subject to the time needed to finalize the documents. She stated that she would keep the board posted and commented that progress on this front was getting close.

Ms. De La Fuente observed that approval of Rosebay would bring the Town to the ten percent threshold.

3. 86 Plain St 40B

Continuing on the affordable housing front, Ms. De La Fuente reported on 86 Plain Street, stating that the Zoning Board's deadline to act was September 29th and that approximately eight meetings had been held to date, with roughly six of those focused on traffic. She added that the hearings had just begun discussing wetlands and the septic system. She stated that time was short, but that the parties were close to finalizing outstanding issues.

Ms. De La Fuente announced that the next meeting would be September 3rd and would focus on the shared septic system serving the twenty-four units and on waiver requests, with a goal of finalizing those items. She stated her belief that the project would be approved, explaining that the application met the specifications applicable to a comprehensive permit. She acknowledged that neighbors were displeased, primarily due to traffic and secondarily due to environmental impacts associated with additional development, including the presence of vernal pools and wetlands, but she stated her view that the issues did not rise to a level that would allow the Zoning Board to reasonably deny a Chapter 40B application.

Ms. Murphy asked, in light of the statewide housing situation, whether the state would be inclined to applaud such a project rather than push back. Ms. De La Fuente answered in the affirmative and described the Housing Appeals Committee process: if the Zoning Board were to deny the application, the matter would proceed to mediation and, if no agreement were reached, to the Housing Appeals Committee. She stated that the Committee had essentially only once

sided with a municipality and that it typically found denials capricious, overruled them, and imposed a small set of basic conditions authorizing construction with minimal oversight, such as submission of plans at the end. She warned that, in such a scenario, the Town would lose the ability to craft more protective conditions and would be at a disadvantage, especially since the Town remained under ten percent on the Subsidized Housing Inventory.

Ms. De La Fuente further noted that, if abutters were to appeal and successfully challenge certain conditions, any conditions not appealed would remain in place, so even with an appeal by neighbors, the Town would likely be in a more advantageous position by issuing an approval with conditions. She added that appeals of 40B decisions are extremely difficult and costly—approximately \$250,000 per party and effectively per household, with demanding criteria—leading her to believe the decision would not be appealed. She concluded that by the end of September or the beginning of October she expected to have an update and observed that, if approved, the project would add six affordable homeownership units.

4. Habitat for Humanity

Ms. De La Fuente stated that she and Select Board Member Mr. Murby would be discussing the Town's appetite for a Habitat for Humanity home; depending on that initial conversation with the Select Board Chair, the matter might be brought to the full Select Board, or it might not, as the discussion would be a temperature check. She expected to have a better sense after the following week.

5. Group Homes

Ms. De La Fuente then reported on the group homes initiative, noting that she and Mr. Thompson were collaborating to identify potential parcels. She stated that she had identified thirty-seven Town-owned parcels not under the care, custody, or control of the Conservation Commission and not comprised entirely of wetlands. She explained that she was reviewing Registry of Deeds records to determine any additional restrictions on those properties and would coordinate with the Department of Public Works to understand which parcels were realistically developable, as some that appear developable are in fact drainage basins. She expressed hope that, over the next few months, she would be able to narrow the list and possibly present new parcels to consider. She acknowledged that Ms. Raposa had previously conducted a review and commented that another look would be worthwhile, given renewed interest in group homes. She affirmed that she would continue due diligence and keep the board updated, noting again that she and Mr. Thompson were actively working on the effort.

Ms. Murphy asked whether a resident could bequeath a home to the Town specifically for use as a group home, and whether neighbors could block such a gift. Ms. De La Fuente responded that acceptance of land and a house would require a Town Meeting vote if it were a Town acquisition, and asked whether Ms. Murphy meant a donation. Ms. Murphy clarified that she was asking about a donation in which an owner, upon passing, left a home to the Town of Medfield for that specific purpose, and whether neighbors could prevent it. Ms. De La Fuente stated that she did not believe neighbors could block such a donation. She explained that if the zoning allowed the use, and because group homes can potentially qualify as a Dover Amendment use, the use would

be protected on that front. She said she believed the Town would be able to accept such a gift if it were possible, though she noted that legal counsel would certainly be involved.

Mr. Marcucci stated that the threshold question would likely be a zoning issue. He noted that the Town could, in some instances, accept a gift without Town Meeting approval, but acknowledged uncertainty as to whether Town Meeting approval would be required in this circumstance. Ms. De La Fuente added that acceptance of an interest in real property might require Town Meeting approval, depending on the nature of the gift, and said she had not encountered that scenario before.

Mr. Marcucci observed that a gift made to the Affordable Housing Trust might be the most appropriate vehicle, as one of the Trust's purposes is to hold real property. He stated his view that a gift to the Trust likely would not require Town Meeting approval unless the gift imposed ongoing costs on the Town. He analogized to the annual approval of perpetual care funds for the cemetery, where the Town agrees that the endowed amount is sufficient to support perpetual care obligations. He returned to Ms. De La Fuente's earlier point, noting that, from a zoning standpoint and given Dover Amendment protections, it would be difficult to prevent such a use, particularly if it involved the same residential footprint. Ms. Murphy agreed that, if the same house footprint were used, the use would remain residential. Mr. Marcucci reiterated the Dover Amendment protection and described a potential scenario in which a donor, whose child would reside in a group home, might deed the home with the expectation that the child could live there with others as part of that use. He remarked that prior discussions had not revealed much appetite for such donations, but that it only takes one. Ms. Murphy concurred that one example can lead to more, and said she had raised the idea because of the board's current focus on such opportunities.

Acknowledgment of the Resignation of Member Joe Hunt

Mr. Marcucci stated that the Board needed to vote to accept Mr. Hunt's resignation. Ms. Murphy expressed disappointment, noting she had forgotten about this development. Ms. De La Fuente explained that Mr. Hunt had been appointed to the Warren Committee, which she described as excellent news. Ms. Murphy congratulated him and remarked that he would be missed.

Mr. Marcucci said the appointment was good for both Mr. Hunt and the Town, adding that he had initially feared Mr. Hunt might be moving away. Ms. De La Fuente confirmed that was not the case and emphasized that his expertise would continue to benefit the Town in his new role. Ms. Murphy noted that, having recently lost Mr. Webber, she regretted losing Mr. Hunt as well.

Mr. Marcucci observed that the resignation left one vacancy on the Trust. Ms. De La Fuente reported that the vacancy had already been posted on the Town website by Ms. Franklin. Mr. Marcucci said he would follow up with a resident who had previously expressed interest and had served in a similar capacity in another town, and he planned to share the posting with her.

Ms. De La Fuente clarified that the Select Board would formally vote to acknowledge Mr. Hunt's resignation at its next meeting, and no action was required by the Trust at this time. She added that Mr. Hunt would likely remain active in his Warren Committee role. Mr. Marcucci concluded with a brief aside regarding committee orientation.

Meeting Minute Approval

Mr. Marcucci transitioned to approval of meeting minutes, beginning with September 5, 2024. He asked for corrections or edits. Ms. Murphy noted that she had been unable to open the December 14 file, at first thinking it was October 17 before confirming it was the December 14 minutes that generated an error message. She said the September 5 minutes opened without issue.

Mr. Marcucci replied that he was able to access the December 14 file, while Ms. De La Fuente expressed uncertainty. Ms. Murphy stated she could not approve those minutes until she was able to open the file. Mr. Marcucci agreed to table the December 14 minutes to the next meeting and asked if there were edits to September 5. Hearing none, he moved to seek action on the September 5 minutes.

Motion: Ms. Murphy made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 5, 2024.

Second: Mr. Lavin seconded that motion.

✓ Roll Call: Ms. Murphy – aye, Mr. Lavin – aye, Mr. Nelson – aye, Mr. Marcucci – aye (4-0)

Mr. Marcucci next took up the minutes of October 17, 2024.

Motion: Ms. Murphy made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 17, 2024.

Second: Mr. Lavin seconded that motion.

✓ Roll Call: Ms. Murphy – aye, Mr. Lavin – aye, Ms. Nelson – aye, Mr. Marcucci – aye (4-0)

Mr. Marcucci then raised the minutes of November 14, 2024, and asked if there were edits or corrections. Ms. Murphy indicated she had none.

Motion: Ms. Murphy made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of November 14, 2024.

Second: Mr. Lavin seconded that motion.

✓ Roll Call: Ms. Murphy – aye, Mr. Lavin – aye, Ms. Nelson – aye, Mr. Marcucci – aye (4-0)

Mr. Marcucci stated that the December 14 minutes would be deferred to the next meeting and that the board would resolve the technical issue that Ms. Murphy had encountered with the PDF.

Scheduling Discussion

Mr. Marcucci opened discussion on future Affordable Housing Trust meetings. Noting the current low volume of business, he suggested maintaining a monthly cadence with flexibility to cancel if necessary. He asked Ms. De La Fuente whether upcoming Medfield State Hospital matters, such as the deed of trust or acceptance of funds, would require a different schedule. She replied that nothing on her radar suggested a change.

Mr. Lavin inquired about funds the Trust would be loaning or granting to Trinity, recalling prior discussions. Mr. Marcucci explained that the Trust would serve as the conduit for state or government funding, but no funds were expected imminently. Ms. De La Fuente added that the Town was still working through older funding and that the engineering phase had delayed progress. She would follow up with Ms. Trierweiler after her return but had no immediate concerns.

Mr. Marcucci then asked about progress at 441. Ms. Murphy asked if any work was occurring at the site. Ms. De La Fuente confirmed that a building permit had been issued for an addition creating two new units, though she did not know whether they would be the affordable units. She explained that the permit secured an additional eighteen months of Subsidized Housing Inventory eligibility. Construction was proceeding slowly, with other renovations to the existing building also underway. Ms. Murphy noted she had observed new windows; Ms. De La Fuente reported new siding as well. Mr. Marcucci acknowledged the update.

Returning to scheduling, Mr. Marcucci asked about Ms. De La Fuente's fall class schedule. She stated that she had classes only on Wednesday evenings, leaving Thursdays available. Mr. Marcucci proposed continuing with Thursday meetings at 7:30 PM, noting that the present meeting was an end-of-month exception due to September scheduling difficulties. He suggested returning to the first-Thursday pattern. Ms. De La Fuente agreed but pointed out that the first Thursday in October fell on Yom Kippur. Mr. Marcucci said the Trust should not meet on Yom Kippur. Ms. Murphy concurred and suggested October 9 instead, adding that the following Monday was the Columbus Day weekend. Ms. De La Fuente confirmed October 9 was workable.

Mr. Marcucci proposed meeting October 9, then resuming the first-Thursday schedule. Ms. De La Fuente affirmed the dates as October 9, November 6, and December 4. Mr. Marcucci confirmed these dates, noting that his previous December conflict had been resolved. He concluded that meetings would continue remotely on the first Thursdays at 7:30 PM, with October 9 as the next session, and expressed hope that the vacancy might be filled by then.

Adjournment

Motion: Ms. Murphy made a motion to adjourn.

Second: Mr. Lavin seconded that motion.

- ✓ Roll Call: Ms. Murphy – aye, Mr. Lavin – aye, Ms. Nelson – aye, Mr. Marcucci – aye (4-0)

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

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