

Town of Lenox  
Affordable Housing Trust & Committee  
September 5, 2019

The Affordable Housing Trust & Committee convened at 6:00 PM

**Members Present**

Julie DiGrigli.....JD  
Frederick Keator .....FK  
Donna Lefkowitz .....DL  
Mary Beth Mitts .....MBM  
Mindy Morin .....MM  
Kate McNulty-Vaughn .....KMV  
Charlene Rosen .....CR  
Olga Weiss .....OW

**Members Absent**

Christopher Fenton, John Gotterer, Jackie McNinch

**Executive Minutes**

MBM stated that the executive minutes must be approved in executive session. Executive session minutes were distributed for reading outside the meeting and we decided to approve them at the next meeting.

**Request for Community Preservation Committee Funding for FY 2021**

CPC has set 9/30/19 for the public hearing to begin the process of requesting CPC funding, however the meeting may be changed. OW said no application is due on that date. However, any applicant must state its intention to seek funding. MBM stated she would go to the meeting to state the Committees’ request to seek funding. FK briefly explained that the Town is the appropriate party to issue any bonds on behalf of CPC for any large housing project.

**Review of First Time Home Buyer Grant Program Guidelines**

KMV discussed the program stating that it began in 2015. The Federal Home Loan Bank does the vetting using HUD income limits, Chris Ketchen signs off on the application and Gwen tracks the approved grants. They are limited to \$10,000 and are not part of the Town’s subsidized housing inventory (SHI). MBM stated that the grant is a lien on the title for 5 years so that grantees cannot walk away within that time without paying it back. KMV stated that she believes that the program is not advertised enough and that there may be stigma attached to applying. Therefore, “affordable” should be eliminated in describing the program.

Members discussed the demographics of grantees and stated that the last grantee was a family with 4 children. JD suggested that the Committee define its top priorities. She mentioned workforce housing particularly in Colorado which uses income limits of 80-120% of the area median income. MBM agreed that there are challenges to providing workforce housing, noting the example of Canyon Ranch as previously described by MM.

KMV stated that the Committee should work toward increasing its affordable housing programs. She suggested participating in Board of Health's foreclosure auctions which require a \$5,000 deposit to enter. A house in Lenox was auctioned for \$100,000 this spring. She stated that there is also a house at 768 East St which is in foreclosure. OW suggested that the Committee work with Pittsfield Habitat for Humanity to increase the Town's affordable housing. KMV and MM volunteered to talk the Carolyn Valli and report back to the Committees.

### **Regular Monthly Meetings, Next Meeting and Remote Participation**

FK discussed the differences in the duties of the Trust versus the duties of the Committee. He suggested that the boards meet separately. OW suggested that we have back to back meetings since some members are on both boards. There was a discussion on whether the boards should meet on the first Thursday or the third Thursday of the month. KMV will send out Doodle to ascertain the best date. It was tentatively agreed that the Committee would meet at 5:00 PM and the Trust would meet at 6:00 PM.

Members agreed that the next meeting would be on Monday 9/16 at 6:00 PM.

JD asked about remote participation since she works outside of Lenox. KMV moved that the Committees approve remote participation of meetings. CR seconded the motion. All 8 members present voted yes. JD said she would look into the requirements. Members stated that the Committee must still have a quorum present without the member participating remotely to conduct a meeting.

### **Adjournment**

OW moved that the meeting be adjourned at 7:05PM and members agreed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charlene Rosen