

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE PLYMOUTH AREA OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

Board/Meeting: Affordable Housing Trust (AHT)

Date/Time/Place of Meeting: Wednesday, November 20, 2024, 8am, Town Hall Cranberry Room & Zoom

Board Members:

Kathleen Dunn, AHT Chair and LWV member (present)
Stephen Michael Palmer, Vice Chair (present)
Lee Hartmann, Planning Director (not present)
Mark Snyder, Certified Public Accountant (present)
Michael Sinclair, Banker (present)
Christopher Knoth, Attorney (present - virtual)
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:

Art Desloges, Town Meeting Member & LWV Affordable Housing Committee Member
Noreen Carey-Neville, LWV Affordable Housing Committee Member
Phoebe Flynn, LWV Affordable Housing Chair and LWV Observer Corps

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

Topics:

- Meeting opened at 8:00am
- Meeting minutes from October 16, 2024 (approved)
- Financial Update: AHT account current balance is \$282,064.59 (approved)
- Report on Habitat for Humanity
 - Site visit @ 195 Wareham Rd (1971 foreclosure)
 - 3.2 acres with a wooded lot > 1 acre that could support a duplex
 - power lines are not a concern.
 - New home @ 596 Wareham Rd
 - Amy Belmore from Habitat took Dunn to visit the site where an addition on a cottage will make for a beautiful home.
 - New concern for all tax title properties is the potential for the old owners or heirs to seek compensation, so tax title developments are on hold for now.

- Palmer said a recent Supreme Court ruling based on a Missouri case determined that an owner or heir can sue for the difference between what they owed and back taxes when the property was seized and what the property is worth.
 - Palmer said Lee would like Habitat to assume this liability, but the town and Habitat would prefer not to be liable.
 - Palmer provided a KP Law document titled Recent Changes in Tax Title Foreclosure Procedures, August 26, 2024.
 - Palmer said the topic will be discussed at the next Redevelopment Authority meeting.
 - Palmer said Strand Ave is now on hold as well due to potential liability
 - Knoth said that title insurance on the properties could alleviate concern for the town, Habitat or a third party.
 - Dunn asked to have it added onto the next agenda for further discussion.
- Report on Nov 14th Community Preservation Committee Meeting
 - Dunn had previously met with Ed Bradley, CPC Chair, about the CPC's projects and Bradley said he found out many CPCs give 10% to their AHT.
 - Bradley invited Dunn to the CPC meeting on Nov 14th, so she and Rowe attended.
 - Dunn and Rowe expected to simply attend and observe, but there seemed to be an expectation from some CPC members that the AHT had come to ask for money. They hadn't but encountered a less than cordial environment from some members where Dunn was asked to speak and they wanted to know what she wanted, but they said they would not give the AHT any money.
 - Ultimately, the procedure for requesting money from the CPC remains the same and includes an application process.
 - Sinclair asked if there's any harm in applying and there isn't, but Snyder said one issue with the CPC application process is if a developer needs the money now, they can't wait for the application process. Dunn confirmed that this has historically been an issue because developers will be ready to start and don't want to wait until the CPC approves application at the next Town Meeting.
 - Rowe said Lynne Barrett, Director of Finance, and a CPC member apologized after the meeting and said they would like the AHT to attend future CPC meetings.
 - Desloges asked if the CPC gave a reason why they didn't want to give the AHT the 10% and Dunn said it was about control of their funds and they also have a large debt based on current projects that needs to be replenished.
 - Dunn said the CPC meets twice a month, so she'd like an AHT rep there at least once a month.
- Master Plan: Add to next month's agenda for additional discussion.
 - Smith has been attending and gave an overview of how the meetings have been running with presentations and break out groups.
 - Dunn also attends and gave an overview of the process

- Dunn said that she, Smith, White, and Desloges will all be at the next meeting, so should try to go to each go to different breakout groups to get a good overview.
- Dunn added that the survey is available on the town website and everyone should take it if they haven't already to provide that feedback and help set the priorities for the town.
- New Legislative Team
 - Dunn said the town has a new legislative team taking office, to include Dylan Fernandes (State Senate), Kathy LaNatra (State Rep), and Michelle Badger (State Rep) and she invited them all to the next AHT meeting.
 - Dunn feels there is a lot of state money going to big projects and not smaller AHTs, so she hopes working with our reps will help the town with AH funding.
 - Dunn also does a lot of work on this topic up at the state house and said of the \$5B Bond Bill, \$800M was set aside for AHT at the state level and he testified to having that money sent directly to municipalities.
 - Dunn also called the State AHT and asked where the money is going or how Plymouth can get it and found out that the money is being managed at the state level for large projects. Dunn was given the names of some big developers.
 - Desloges said Dunn should ask them to come to the AHT meeting so we can lobby for money, which Dunn said she will do when we have projects, like she did when we had ARPA projects. Dunn said the State is looking for shovel-ready projects, and the big developers can apply for funds. The Redbrook project is asking for tax credits. Snyder mentioned that the Plymouth AHT could ask the state to cover the portion of their requested commitment that the AHT cannot cover for Redbrook.
 - Dunn recommended making their invites recurring as we have projects ready for funding.
 - Dunn said that if Habitat can't do 195 Wareham, she will reach out to other developers.
- Old Business
 - Oak Street: completed with occupancy permit, one moved in and one approved, with a third application open.
 - Pulte Homes
 - The three properties are on Court St, Prince St, and Hedges Rd: 50 homes each, for 150 total homes with 38 being affordable.
 - Pulte presented to the Select Board but Select Board Chair and Vice were not receptive to the project.
 - Pulte has not purchased the property yet. They want approval before purchase.
 - Issues include traffic and other concerns.
- Redevelopment Authority: Palmer was in DC and spoke to Congressman Bill Keating about AHT money and redevelopment. Redevelopment Authorities are on the Cape, Plymouth, and Hull. At a recent meeting, Palmer noticed Hull has \$2.5M in their account and Plymouth typically has about \$100k. Palmer

discovered that about 30 years ago, the Federal Government, under the HUD Administration, doled out millions of dollars for redevelopment. He said Plymouth must have also received this, but spent it, but Hull has kept theirs because they use incoming revenue (beach rental for example) for projects and don't do 1st time home buyers, lotteries, and other things that cost Plymouth money, but are also part of the RA? income. The other realization is that since the RA is under HUD, they have the option to seek funding directly from the Federal Government under HUD, which might help alleviate asking the town for money at Town Meeting. Palmer is going to investigate these options.

- Meeting adjourned at 9:02am.

Handouts:

- Agenda for 11/20/24
- AHT Financial Summary as of 11/20/24

Observer: Phoebe Flynn, LWV Observer Corps

*The observer for this meeting had to depart the meeting at 8:30, so watched a recording of the second half 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>