



TOWN OF IPSWICH

IPSWICH, MASSACHUSETTS 01938

Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board &
Ipswich Housing Partnership Joint Meeting
Meeting Minutes

March 23, 2023 7:30 am

Room A

Ipswich Housing Partnership Attendees: Charlie Allen, Carl Gardner, Binni Hackett, Michael Jones, Stacey Pedrick, Ken Redford, Patsy Valcour, Jim Warner

Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board Attendees: Jim Warner, Binni Hackett, Michael Jones, Sarah Player, Michael Schaaf

Other Attendees: John Doonan, Paul Nordberg, Maria Temple

Staff: Mark Godin, Glenn Gibbs

Call to Order: Quorum established for the IHP+AHTFB at 7:30 am.

Citizen Queries: Paul Nordberg introduced himself and communicated his interest in affordable housing matters.

Allen asked for a discussion of existing affordable housing programs supported by IHP+AHTFB. The focus is on identifying programs that are working well and should be continued, and which need to be scaled back or discontinued. Gibbs noted the staff time required to promote and manage these programs.

Rehab Loan Program (Rehab)

There are no current applications in process for Rehab loans. Warner stated that this program has worked well in the past. The group noted the need to clarify dollar limits of the loans that are clearly stated. There is a need for ongoing monitoring of the work and staying connected with contractors. Allen asked for 2 volunteers to help steer and re-energize this program – Hackett and Warner volunteered to do this. Schaaf mentioned that there are federal programs for home rehab and suggests those be reviewed. Gibbs reminded the group that the Coburn Charitable Trust is also still available to tap into.

Gardiner voiced opinion that Rehab loans should be repaid under all circumstances and that the guidelines for the loans should be changed to state this. Schaaf and Warner concurred with this opinion. Schaaf also raised concerns about liability in regard to building code not being followed when we fund these projects. Warner stated this is not an issue as rehab must be done to building code. Godin plans to update program materials on the website for consistency.

First Time Home Buyers Program (FTHB)

Godin stated that there are currently 2 applicants for this program. Both are at the beginning stage. Gardiner stated that we should not be funding this program and would be in favor of discontinuing. The rationale is that the units are already provided with a substantial discount off market rates. Schaaf agreed with this position. Warner stated more discussion is needed and suggests continuing the process with

current applicants without actively promoting the program. Future consideration can be given to a pause or full stop. Jones and Schaaf to evaluate changes and future viability of the program.

HOME program

We have not put a project forward over the past 3 yrs. that would qualify for HOME funds. It would be useful to keep up with the consortium and what they are offering. We also need to check current status of HOME funds (non-competitive). Player stated funds could possibly be used for 161 Topsfield Rd. Valcour inquired about the Police station property as another potential site. This is TBD since the Safety Building project may impact what will happen. Godin will connect with HOME contact to determine status of funds.

Planning Board Collaboration

Allen reiterated the key goal of IHP/AHTFB as promoting affordable housing and asked how this group might better collaborate with the Planning Board (PB). Gibbs suggested forming a workgroup with PB members that can review by-laws affecting affordable housing. This would include becoming aware of open/new PB projects, looking at opportunities for buy-downs, etc. Player volunteered to interact with PB and to watch for opportunities.

Promoting Affordable Housing – Communication

The group discussed ways to promote affordable housing in the community. This includes dispelling myths about affordable multi-family housing. Player noted a helpful powerpoint presentation that was given by Harborlight at their Housing Institute a few weeks ago. She will forward the presentation to this group when available. Player also suggestion a video taped interview with a resident who has benefited from an affordable housing program. She also volunteers to take an affordable housing presentation “on the road”. Schaaf suggested involving the Ipswich Partnership and also the Rotary Club. Godin again mentioned the need for improvements on the Town’s Housing webpage. The MBTA zoning committee certainly shares our goal of educating the community – some collaboration with that group makes sense.

Future Meeting Items

Player requests a discussion of the Community Preservation Act and funds at next meeting.
Warner requests development of Trust Fund guidelines that could be shared with developers to give them a better idea of how the Trust Fund is able/willing to do to support multi-family and other projects.

New Business:

Schaaf has approached state Rep. Kristin Kassner regarding state owned property on Linebrook Rd to see if there is possibility the Town can acquire it for housing.

Next Meeting: Due to scheduling issues, the next meeting will be April 27th.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:00 am.

Minutes prepared by Mark Godin

Minutes adopted: 4/27/23