



TOWN OF IPSWICH

IPSWICH, MASSACHUSETTS 01938

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

August 10, 2023 7:30 am

Meeting Room B-2

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

Affordable housing Trust Fund Board Attendees: Jim Warner, Michael Jones, Sarah Player, Michael Schaaf

Other/Guests:

Staff: Mark Godin, Brendan Conboy, Glenn Gibbs

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

Citizen Queries: None

Vote to approve Minutes of 7/13/23 Meeting: The 7/13/23 Meeting minutes were unanimously approved by both the IHP and AHTFB.

Property Updates:

2 Washington St. Allen reported that 2 Washington St. (an EBSCO property) has been put on the market. It is a potential affordable housing site that had been identified a year ago and looked at by Harborlight. The parcel is 2 acres and the building is 23,000 sq. ft. and assessed at about \$3 Million. Harborlight is aware and plans to look at the property again. The building itself may not be suitable for housing but the property represents an opportunity.

21 Leslie Rd. The RFP is still in review by the state and awaiting approval.

161 Topsfield Rd. Conboy reported that the wetlands delineation for this site is pending completion.

69 S. Main St. Gardner reported this property is vacant and owned by a family trust. It is a 3-family 3,800 sq. ft. building. It is an historic home built in the 1700s. This could be an opportunity to develop as affordable housing as the Town owns an abutting property. Warner stated the property has a history of flooding. It's not on the market but Gardner feels the Town should have an interest in the property and agreed to look into it further.

14, 21-23 Lafayette Rd. Doonan reported on this property owned by Drew Marc-Aurele. Marc-Aurele is interested in speaking to the IHP about making the 2 units at 14 Lafayette permanently affordable and

being compensated in some way for doing so. Doonan has also spoken to MassHousing and they are also interested and may be willing to help. Marc-Aurele would also consider making affordable units at 21-23 Lafayette (14 units). He is asking about what the Town would be willing to contribute to renovate the buildings and make them affordable. One question would be what level of affordability the units would be rented at and Allen stated the Town has already made 60% the rate for rental units. Next steps would be to visit the properties and discuss with the owner what may be workable. We can involve MassHousing and would need to determine the appropriate point at which to bring them in. Doonan will set up a meeting with the owner and include Allen and Godin.

Report from workgroup exploring funding sources for the Trust Fund

Player introduced the topic and referenced her write up of the group's discussion. Redford reviewed the findings of the group and noted that the primary purpose was to look at ways to replenish the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) through various means but also to consider options when affordable housing projects are identified. Potential local funding sources include the Community Preservation Act, Land Trusts, Affordable Housing Bonds, and Short Term Rental fees. State funding sources include those from EOHL and MassHousing. There are also federal tax credits and debt funding sources. Redford suggested consideration of short term and long term strategies. Also, there is a need to have a track record and demonstrate to the community that the Trust Fund is being used toward affordable housing projects. Allen stated that some funding sources would be development-specific and we could participate with a developer to go after them. Other sources would be ones we would take the lead on in order to replenish the AHTF. Schaaf noted that some sources would be somewhere in the middle and would likely require a specific project that funds would be used for.

Allen stated, and others concurred, that pursuing funds from the Preservation Act and short term rental fees would not be strategic to initiate in the short term. Gardner countered that the revenue coming into the Town from short term rentals is considerable, and that funds from this source could be used to support affordable housing resources such as increasing the coordinator position to full time. Player, Allen and Warner were of the opinion that it would be important to demonstrate accomplishments before asking the Town for more funding. Player offered to have a conversation with the Town Manager about the funds generated by the short term rental tax and explore what would be involved to change how the funds are allocated. Schaaf referenced the Town's strategic planning and the possibility of including affordable housing funding in an updated strategic plan. Allen suggested it would be significant indicator of the Town's investment in affordable housing to allocate funding for this purpose. Player suggested that the IHP and AHTFB consider another presentation to the Select Board. The hope is that the Select Board would formally identify affordable housing in its list of goal areas. Player asked the group to offer some goals that might be discussed at the upcoming SB meeting where goal setting will be discussed. The ideas and goals could include both review of past results and future initiatives that could also include policy changes to favor affordable housing initiatives. Allen offered the example of a potential SB goal that could consider offering property tax exemptions for developers if they build affordable units. Warner suggested making rounds with the various Town boards on at least an annual basis to present ongoing affordable housing issues. Player re-introduced the idea of requiring developers to review their plans first with the affordable housing boards as a required step before PB review. Player also offered to draft and circulate some presentation talking points that the IHP+AHTFB could use for future PB and SB presentations.

Financing Strategies continued discussion:

Allen suggested the need to formalize conclusions from the prior discussions about financing strategies and asked the group about how to state these. A hypothetical situation/question was asked, "if parcel

were to come on the market in a favorable location, what would the AHTF be willing to offer financially to secure that property? What actions would the AHTF be willing to take to help a developer such as Harborlight acquire such a property?" There was discussion of "options" on a property purchase and the pros and cons of going the options route. Ideally, involving a partner such as Harborlight would help ensure the feasibility of the property and they could offer the purchase option using AHTF money. Warner restated the need to reserve a larger portion of the Trust Fund for substantial projects that would create a higher number of affordable units. Schaaf offered that, although reserving this larger portion is an important consideration, it would also be important to proceed with any opportunities that present themselves in the near term, even if they are smaller scale. The Lafayette St. property was discussed as an example of a nearer term opportunity. Redford suggested having a "pipeline" of potential properties under consideration and ranking them for feasibility could help guide how Trust funds should be used. It was noted that there have been prior discussions with EBSCO and a likelihood that their real estate strategies are not locally managed. Further discussion with EBSCO would be advantaged by including Harborlight as a partner. Jones suggested that a shorter term of perhaps 180 days be used for an option offer.

Housing Inventory data – initial review

Godin reviewed the initial housing inventory data provided from the Assessor's office. A preliminary report was created to show inventory by larger zoning categories e.g. residential, commercial, and also by Land Use Codes (LUC). The report shows number of buildings in each category and LUC. The group had interest in a further breakout of what zoning districts specific apartment properties may be in. One possible goal of analysis would be to consider contacting owners of specific apartment properties to offer help with rehab projects that could lead to an affordability designation. Next steps in the analysis will be to provide a report with more detail for the 43 apartment buildings and include street location, owner, and number of units.

New Business: Player asked about a possible date of an IHP-AHTFB presentation to the SB and will put a placeholder for the November SB meeting.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for Thurs. Sept 14th at 7:30 AM.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:00 am.

Minutes prepared by Mark Godin

Minutes adopted: September 14, 2023